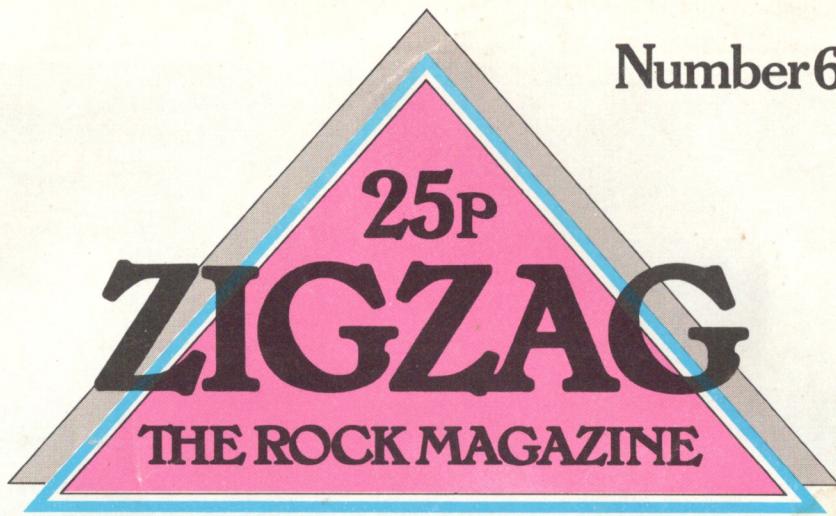
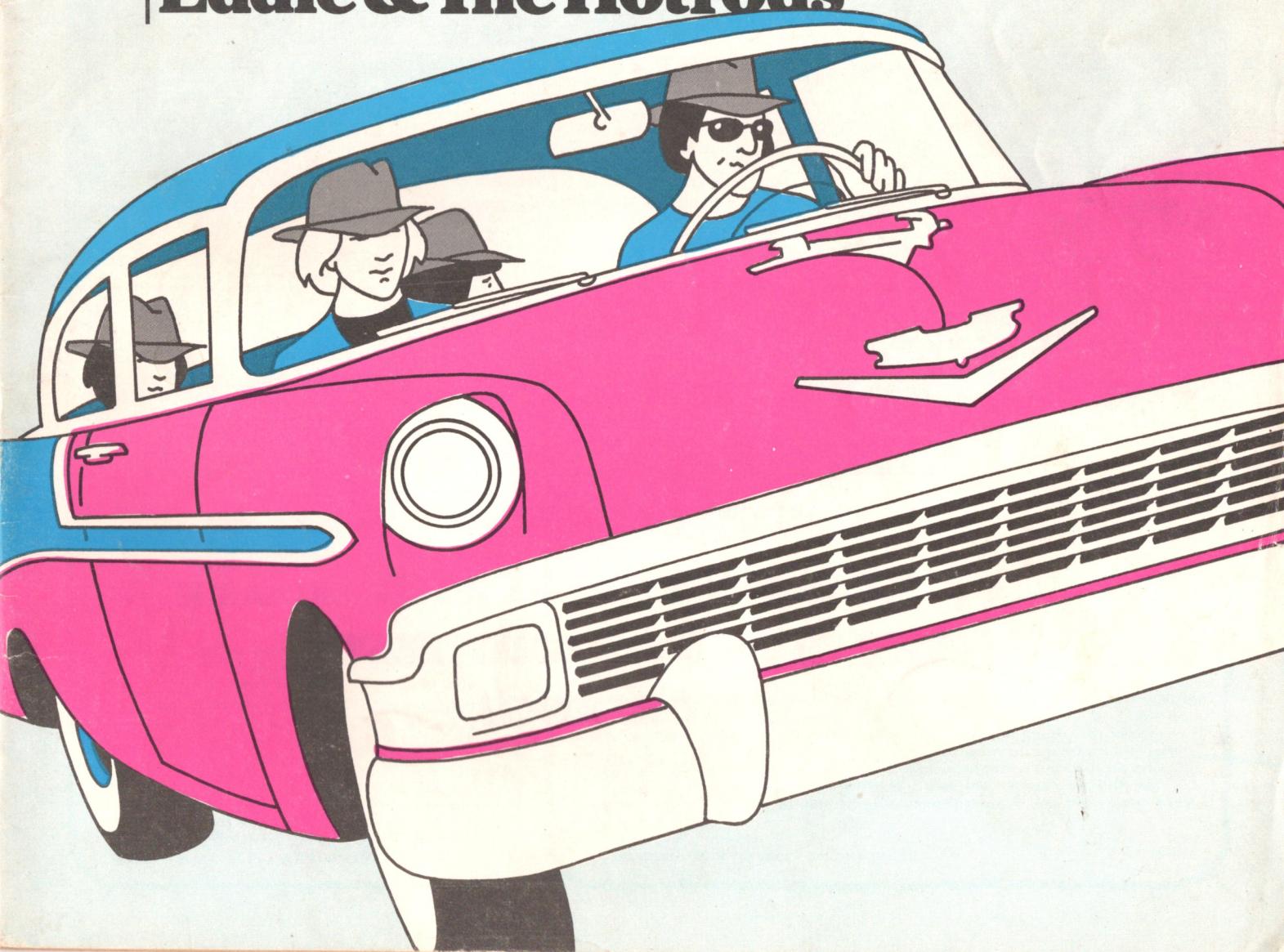


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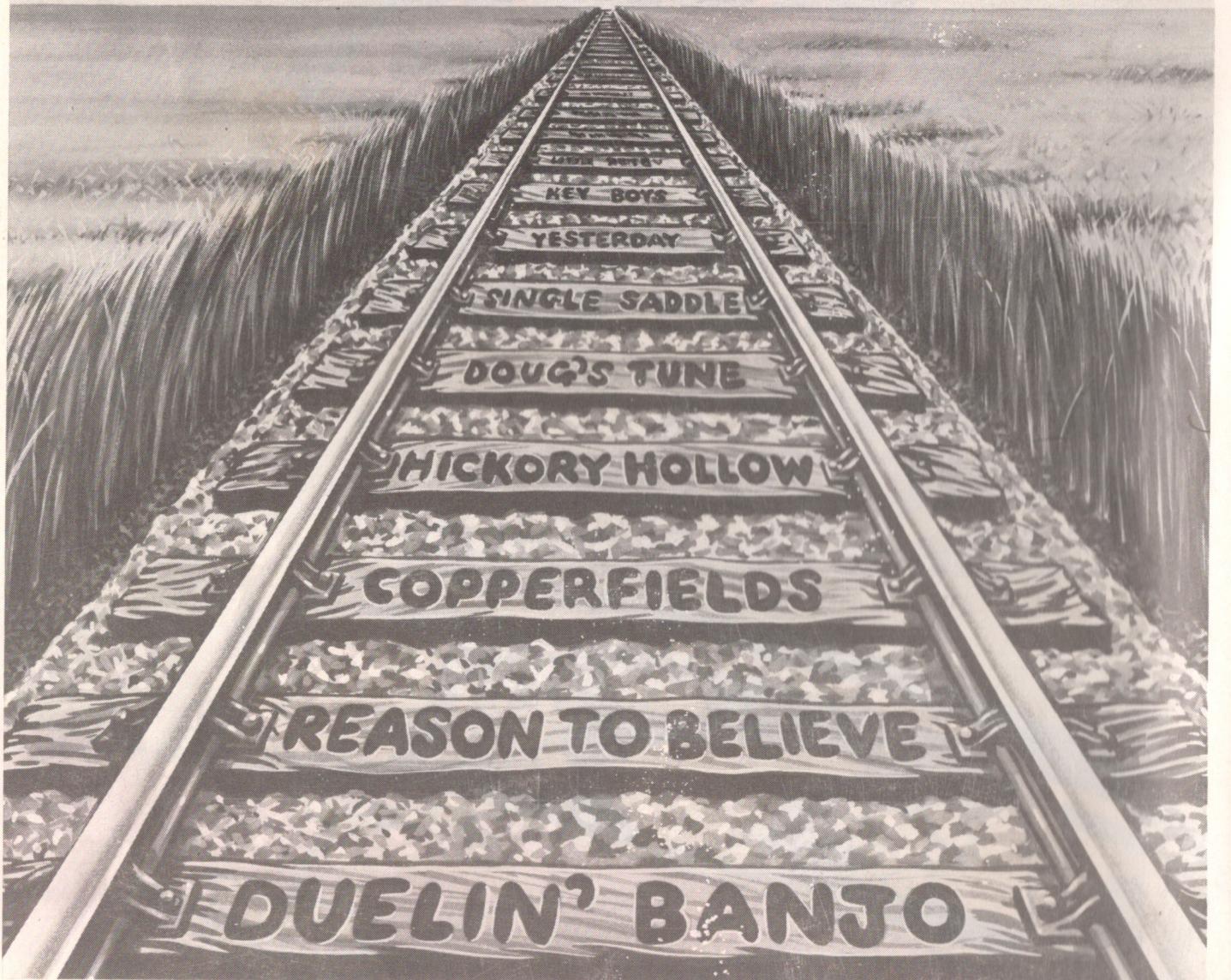


**Procol Harum | Nils Lofgren
Sons of Champlin | JJ Cale
Graham Parker | Kaleidoscope**

**PUNK ROCK
COMES TO TOWN
Eddie & The Hotrods**



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ZIGZAG 60

May 1976

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CONTENTS

As a result of a change of distributors and a bit of publicity, we seem to have attracted a lot of new readers, some of whom are puzzled by our bias towards the more underpublicised names of rock.... and to some degree, we're finding ourselves in a bit of a cleft stick: On the one hand is a constant flow of letters from new readers demanding stuff on current fave raves like Queen or Steve Harley, and on the other, a similar deluge of mail from the early, hardcore Zigzagers, requesting more historical/encyclopaedia-style articles on obscure trailblazers such as H. P. Lovecraft and the Fifty Foot Hose.

Well, we can't please everyone, I guess, so we tend to please ourselves. Zigzag has never crusaded for a huge readership; as long as we just about make ends meet sufficiently to keep going, we're happy. So, if you like Zigzag, that's great, and if you don't... well, we don't give a toss - that's your tough luck. We might bend here and there, out of commercial necessity, but we're not going to pander to anyone, because once you start doing that, you may as well hang up your rock'n'roll shoes.

Anyway, this month we present our usual jumble of characters old and new, known and unknown.... starting off with PROCOL HARUM, who've just logged up their 1750th public performance of 'A Whiter Shade Of Pale'. Paul Kendall, now a full time writer (when he's not stomping the boards with Aylesbury's hottest combo), has been working very hard this month. Not only has he embarked on the Procol story, but, wearing his rose-coloured spectacles as ever, foresees nothing but fame and fortune for EDDIE & THE HOT RODS, yet another bundle of vibrant, supercharged lunacy roaring out of Southend. He is also pleased to note the escalating popularity of J. J. CALE (not noted for his energetic delivery), whose background he investigated during the recent visit.

THE SONS OF CHAMPLIN have been staggering around Marin County for the last ten years without making any effort to shape their music for mass audience consumption - and doubtless they'll be staggering around for the next ten too. We include a fairly comprehensive examination of their career and attitude, based on an interview Tobler and I did during our Californian foray of late '73.

Mac winds up his KALEIDOSCOPE story, and is now looking for a fresh project to get his teeth into.... which is why he's seeking your ideas in his poll this month. He's been playing the two Clover albums for a solid week now - hope it's not an omen. Apart from that, he has almost been sleeping in the offices of the A&R Department at CBS, desperately trying to bludgeon them into releasing a limited edition of the first two Kaleidoscope albums. No success yet, but he hasn't given up, and hopes to have brighter news next month.

Ken Barnes, a high ranker in your "favourite journalists" poll, contributes a timely piece on NILS LOFGREN, which we whipped from a great Californian publication called Phonograph Record Magazine.

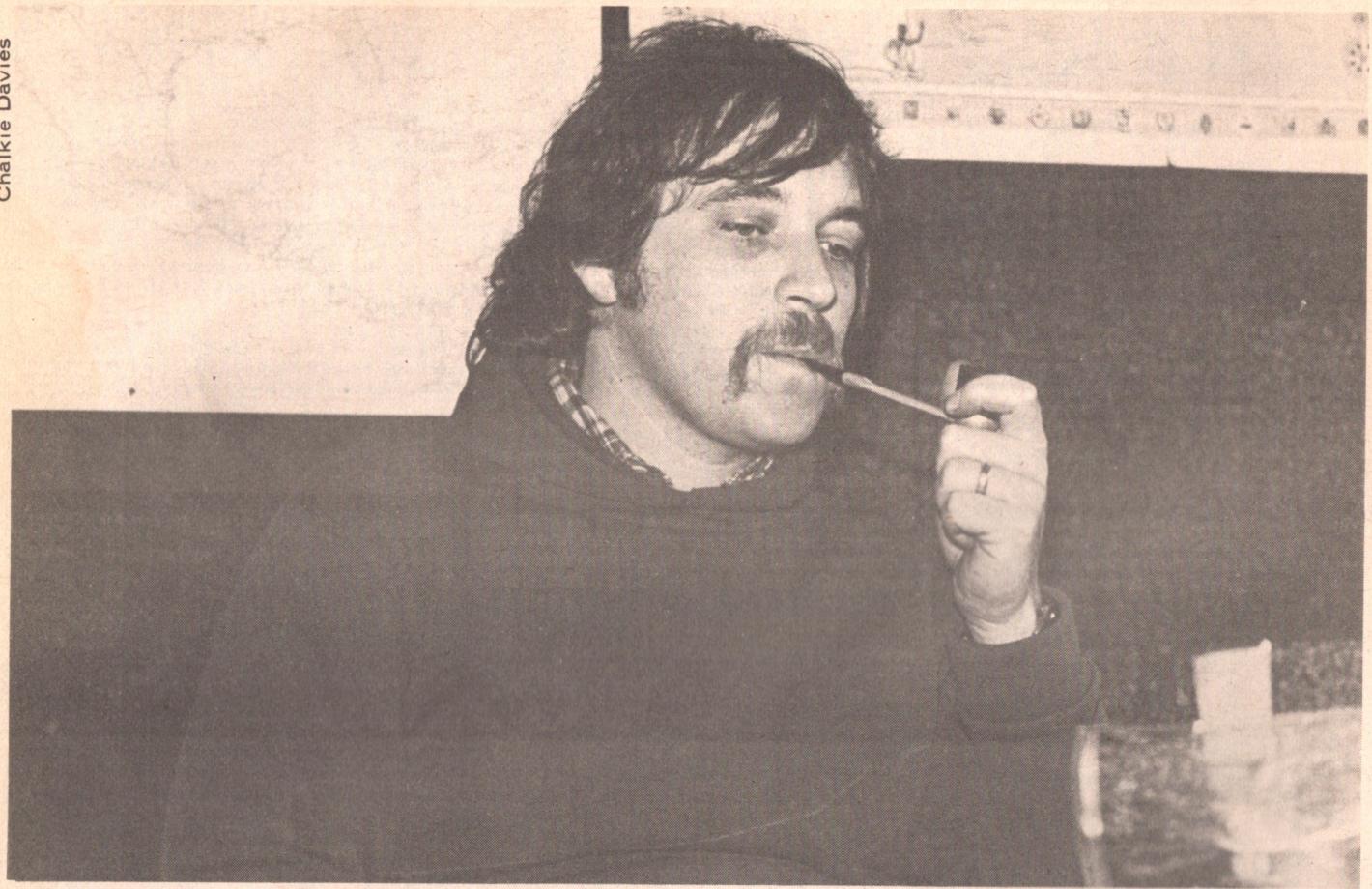
Apart from that, we have a few pages of record reviews... and in reply to numerous queries from sleeve scrutinisers: yes, the Kris Needs who writes the odd review (including one on the Flamin Groovies in this very issue), is the same geezer who runs The Hott Motts (formerly the Sea Divers). A local idiot of some renown, Needs works for the local paper in Aylesbury (vastly exaggerating the importance of such happenings as John Otway's tour of Women's Institutes.... big headline jobs!), plays his bongos in various local hosteries, is never to be seen without a Pearls Before Swine album under his arm, gets extremely sozzled now and then, and is very prone to go over the top when discussing new albums (and reviewing them).

As you can see, the cover announces an article on Graham Parker. You may find a review, and even an advertisement, but seek as you may.... you'll not find an article. Strict adherence to our monthly timetable is not only killing the staff, it's generating various problems - not the least of which is the need for the cover to be designed and printed two weeks before the rest of the magazine.... and this month, the projected Graham Parker interview didn't quite come together. Next issue.

Nothing this month from Andy Childs, the world's laziest writer.... and precious little from Tobler. In my capacity as over-riding editor (well, someone has to do it), I'm afraid I had to reject all but one of his album reviews, all his articles, and his Stuff'n'Nonsense column - which was all about how he currently spends most of his life watching trees blossom and vegetables grow. Actually, I'm getting a little worried about young Tobler.... running around the streets of Knaphill clad in floral summer dresses, obsessively collecting every record he can lay his hands on (irrespective of how dreadful it might be), terrorising the neighbourhood every night with his dogs, running amok at press receptions, making the most prodigious car journeys after drinking gallons of Fullers, churning out yards of ephemeral hogwash for the NME each week.... and now he's taken to lying in his garden, listening to the grass grow. In between times, he managed to submit a fat wad of manuscript based on the interview he did with Bonnie Raitt - but it was even more unreadable than his usual, inimitable style of long-winded gibberish, sprinkled with serial numbers, obscure names, and idiotic postulations. It's been held over, pending modification.

How long can this go on, I ask myself?

Pete



PROCOL UNVEILED

PART ONE:

Dealing with a group history as long and illustrious as that of Procol Harum is obviously not something that can be done in a few trite paragraphs; so, for better or worse, this saga is likely to turn into quite an epic (though not quite on the scale of Frame's Byrd monster). Anyway, for this first episode, we're going to concentrate exclusively on the group's activities up to June 1967, when 'A Whiter Shade of Pale' was released. Except in the case of real supergroups, it's rare to find any attention given to what happened to someone before they became famous, but I've always reckoned that one of the most fascinating aspects of the music business is the various ways in which people and bands make it to the top. So, Procol Harum....this is your life:

ZZ: Was the Paramounds the first group you played in?

Gary Brooker: No, I was in a skiffle

group first. Then I was in a group called The Coasters, with a bloke called Johnny Short on guitar. There were loads of groups around at the time - including the Raiders, who were Robin Trower, Chris Copping, Gary Nichols on drums, and Mick Trower (Robin's brother) on vocals.....we all knew one another; it was a fairly tight little scene.

ZZ: You were all from Southend...

GB: That's right. One night, Chris Copping stood in on bass for us - we were an odd sort of group, because we didn't have a regular bassplayer, and we just played instrumentals....

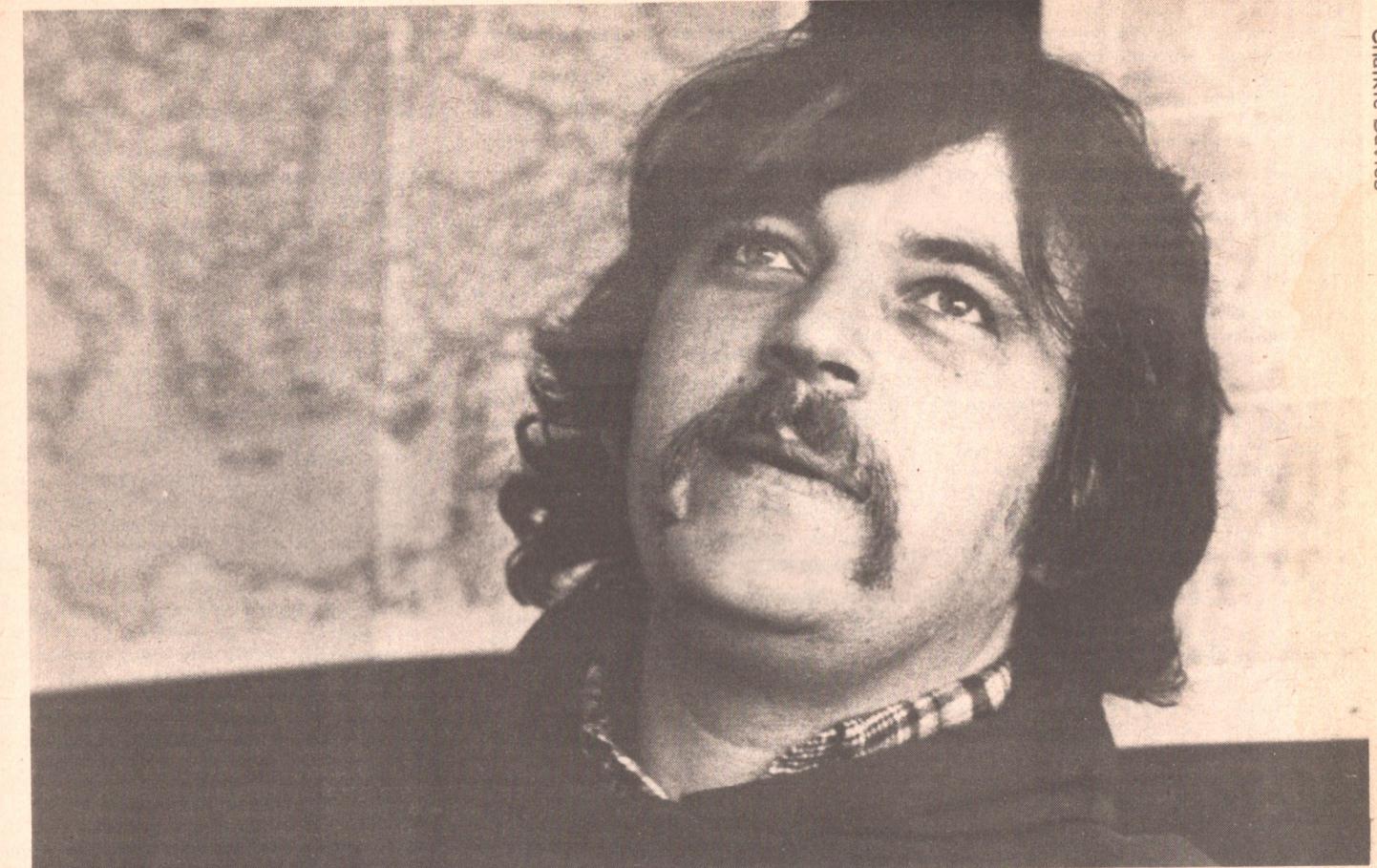
Les Paul numbers and stuff like that - and in return for Chris appearing with us, I did a few jobs with the Raiders....this would be around 1959, I suppose. Anyway, the Raiders ditched Gary Nichols and Mick Trower and brought in a bloke called

Brian Richards only stayed for a few months, but he introduced us to a lot of good records - he was mad keen on Carl Perkins, for instance - but he never turned up for jobs, so we gave him the elbow. We started playing the Palace Dance Hall, which was a big job in those days, and the manager there got us a few gigs and gave us a new name....The Paramounds. He had another group called Bob Scott and the Clansmen, and they

they used to take me on the occasional gig, when I wasn't playing with the Coasters.

Then one day, Robin pulled this stroke: he asked me to do this job one saturday night, and I said "No, I can't....I'm playing with Johnny's band". So he said, "Oh, that's OKI've phoned him, and he says that you're not doing that job after all!". So we went out, and I didn't see Johnny Short for a few days - and it turned out he knew nothing about any phone call and had assumed I'd left the bandand that was that. I stayed with the Raiders.

Brian Richards only stayed for a few months, but he introduced us to a lot of good records - he was mad keen on Carl Perkins, for instance - but he never turned up for jobs, so we gave him the elbow. We started playing the Palace Dance Hall, which was a big job in those days, and the manager there got us a few gigs and gave us a new name....The Paramounds. He had another group called Bob Scott and the Clansmen, and they



PROCOL HARUM

THE THIN END OF THE WEDGE

packed up, so Bob Scott joined us. He was a good singer, he liked Ricky Nelson, and he stayed for a while....until one night he just didn't turn up. By this time, we were doing all sorts of dance halls - big jobs - and it fell to me and the drummer to take over the vocals, because we knew all the words between us.

ZZ: What sort of stuff were you into then?

GB: Mostly American; Jerry Lee Lewis and Rick Nelson, plus a few Shadows instrumentals to help us go down well with audiences....but it was mostly American rock'n'roll. It would be around the time of 'FBI' by the Shadows...that was one of their things we did.

ZZ: Early 1961.

GB: Around then, yes. We carried on as a four piece, and it started to go well...we were getting a lot of jobs - but then Mick Browny packed it in for a while, and we had one or two

other drummers, including Tony Diamond, formerly of the Red Diamonds, who later joined the Orioles with Mick Jupp. In fact, even Bobby Harrison popped up for an occasional night - he was the cousin of Tony in a group called The Rockerfellers. Also by this time, Chris Copping had started studying, so Ada Baggerly, who was also in the Orioles, used to play for us - then, when Chris left to take up chemistry and drinking at university, Diz Derrick joined.

(If all this is getting too complicated, you are advised to refer to the Southend family tree in ZZ 56).

We did quite a lot of backing jobs in those days (61/62), for artistes who came down to Southend - Tommy Bruce and Ricky Valance, people like that. In fact, we backed Tommy Bruce on a thing called 'Rock across the Channel', on the boat to Calais; it was us, Gerry & the Pacemakers, Duffy Power and the Dreamers, the Shadows....

ZZ: How did those things work? Did you get an afternoon's rehearsal be-

fore the gig?

GB: Oh no....no rehearsal. These blokes didn't used to turn up until five minutes before they were due to go on - and they only had a twenty minute spot. They used to bring little sort of charts, with the chords scribbled down - so anybody who could follow a chord chart used to get the job of backing them.

ZZ: Did they used to pay reasonably well?

GB: Pay? We did it just for the fun of it, but the manager from the dance hall always took a good interest in us, and used to get us all our jobs. We were leaving school around then - I can remember swotting for exams as I walked home from a job - and we'd also started this cellar club called the Shades. It used to be called The Penguin, and we did it all up.

B. J. Wilson (who had just entered the room): I joined the group just as the stage was being built.

ZZ: What had you been doing before?

BJW: I'd just been in local groups with friends around Edmonton.... I'd never played with anyone of note, if that's what you mean. I looked in the Melody Maker one week, and there was an ad which said "Professional group needs drummer".

GB: Mick Brown had packed up for good by this time.... he'd acquired responsibilities as a result of this girl. In fact, we didn't have that much work at all - we just sat around all day taking pills.

BJW: I liked it down the cellar club, and I moved down to live with Robin Trower for a while.

GB: When we left school, this manager bloke suggested making a record - but we refused, because the great sin in those days was being commercial. But he said "well, put one down anyway - just so you've got something on record". So we did 'Poison Ivy', the old Coasters number, which we used to do on stage - and he started taking it round the companies.

BJW: We did that one and 'Further On Up The Road' with Glyn Johns at IBC Studios.

ZZ: Robin Trower reckoned that was the best session the Paramounds ever did - better than any of the singles.

GB: They're not as bad as you remember them - I played them a little while ago. The best one we ever did, though, never got released.

BJW: 'Freedom', the old Charlie Mingus number we used to do, backed by a choir of friends.

GB: Anyway, the manager took the tape to Ron Richards at Parlophone, and they offered us a contract. As I understand it, he said "I've got the Beatles on this side, and the Hollies on this side, and I want something in the middle." I don't think he ever had anything to do with the Beatles, though, that was George Martin. So we signed with them and started getting jobs all over the place.

ZZ: Still backing other people?

GB: No - that was on our own, but we backed other people now and then.... like we did Mike Berry once, I remember.

BJW: Mainly we did ballrooms - the Friday night dance things that everybody used to go to.

GB: They used to be packed; three thousand people in every town. Do they still have those things? I guess the Rubettes must play something like that.... but they were the whole scene in those days; those and the more elite thing, the clubs, which was a very cliquy scene. Anyway, it was around that time that we did a gig with the Rolling Stones in Deal - and we got on well with them. They were just reaching the stage when they were too big to go on playing the places they'd been playing, and they gave us a lot of jobs.

ZZ: They were playing fairly similar music, weren't they? Like 'Poison Ivy' - they used to do that.

GB: Yes, we overlapped slightly, but we were doing James Brown and Bobby Bland and Ray Charles, and they were much more Bo Diddley and Chuck Berry orientated. They spoke to promoters and we got a lot of the jobs they'd been doing.... they

were all good scenes. The other places, like Rotherham Baths, were real pop things.... all about presentation. You had to wear a uniform and look good. We had suede waistcoats, and blue suede boots - but it didn't seem anything at the time.... I mean, the Stones wore knitted ties.

A brief pause in proceedings is in order here, to say that while the Paramounds were with Parlophone, they recorded seven singles between 1963 and 1966. The first two, 'Poison Ivy' and 'Little Bitty Pretty One', both saw a little chart action, but the third, 'Bad Blood' was banned by the BBC, who in their wisdom thought it was a ditty about syphilis. Unfortunately, 'It won't be long', 'Blue ribbons' and 'You never had it so good' failed to create much of a stir, and the aforementioned 'Freedom' was never even released.

ZZ: Were the singles recorded with Glyn Johns too?

GB: No, they were done with Ron Richards at EMI studios. The major disadvantage of that period was that we were never really allowed to do what we wanted. We'd have a three hour session to do 4 numbers, or whatever, and never hear them being mixed. We never had a chance to do the numbers we wanted to.... and all in all it was pretty frustrating.

We performed most of the singles on television - 'Thank your lucky stars!', 'Five o'clock club' and 'Ready Steady Go!' - but we never played live on the radio.... we tried three or four times, but never passed the BBC audition. It wasn't a matter of passing the audition in those days though, it was a matter of bending down - that's what we were told.

ZZ: BJ, didn't you pop off for a few months around late 64, early 65?

BJ: Yes, for about 6 months I played with Jimmy Powell and the 5 Dimensions.... just after Rod Stewart left. I was friends with two of the guys and I just fancied a change.

GB: We got in Phil Wainman - THE Phil Wainman - who was quite a good drummer. I remember telling him he was out when BJ rejoined.... he was a very resourceful person, though, so he wasn't too upset.

ZZ: Was Sandie Shaw the only person you backed during your latter days?

GB: We did a Beatles tour, their last one, and backed one or two of the people on that - but we only did that kind of gig because financially we just weren't able to make ends meet. We went to Paris with Sandie Shaw, and played at the Olympia for three weeks, which was a nice steady little income.

BJW: She was great - she used to sing lovely, even though it wasn't our kind of music. She'd do things like 'Lemon Tree' and 'Long live love', and a few groovy numbers like 'The Clapping Song'. We even did 'The Girl from Ipanema', which nobody ever knew the chords to, but we managed to get through it every time.

Just after that, we packed up - around September 1966... but then we had an offer to go to Germany with a singer called Chris Andrews. It paid about £30 a week, so we did that. Robin Trower didn't want to go, so we got

another guitarist and a saxophonist, and did the tour - just to earn a bit of money.... when we came home, we went our separate ways.

GB: The Paramounds only really declined in the last year. In the early days of the group, we were doing all these unusual numbers which people enjoyed hearing - but then a lot of bands started doing them.... people like Zoot Money and the Animals, and I reckon that's one of the reasons our popularity declined.

ZZ: Were you writing your own stuff at all?

GB: A couple of those b-sides were written by Robin and me - but they were hardly written! Ron Richards would say "we need a b-side", and we'd suggest something like 'Turn on your love light' by Bobby Bland - but he said "no.... if you write your own b-side, you'll get an extra £1 in royalties". In fact, I got a statement from Dick James Music for fourpence! It said "as this amount is too small, we are adding it to the next statement".... but I never got another one! The numbers we wrote were put together in about three minutes flat.... just a few words that rhymed, a few chords, and that was it. One of them wasn't bad actually - 'Don't ya like my love'?

BJW: There was even a group that covered that song - some American spade group.

ZZ: Had you any ideas what you were going to do when the Paramounds called it a day?

GB: Well, I had already met Keith Reid. We used to go round to Guy Stevens' house - having met him at the Crawdaddy Club, where he used to play the records - he had this huge record collection, and we used to get material off him (for the Paramounds). We'd borrow a pile of records for a week, and learn off another fifteen or so numbers, you know. Anyway, I met Keith there one day, while the Paramounds were still going, and we wrote a couple of songs together. So when we packed the group up, I was going to become a songwriter - in partnership with Keith.... I thought, right, we'll have a go at that.

ZZ: What had Keith been doing?

GB: Nothing.... nothing at all.... a bit of labouring, maybe. He hadn't been a poetry reciter or an English language teacher, or anything. Diz went back to school, studied the flute, and took up jazz piano.... I didn't see him again until a couple of years ago. Robin started a trio in Southend, and Barrie almost joined that.

BJW: But I backed out - I didn't like three piece groups - and I just went off and played with other groups, like George Bean and the Runners.... just drifting along.

GB: I didn't want to know anything about performing at all; I'd been through all that, and had had enough. I just wanted to write. So I took our songs along to a few contacts from the days of the Paramounds.... like Andrew Oldham, who paid for us to do a demo, with just me at the piano, but we didn't have any luck at all. We got a definite elbow. I thought the numbers were alright, but nobody was at all interested in doing them.

ZZ: Which numbers were these?

Alberto Y Lost Trios Paranoias
Harvey Andrews
Peter Bardens
Chris Barber
John Coltrane
Rev. Gary Davis
Decameron
Richard Digance
The Dransfields
Marc Ellington
John Fahey
Country Gazette
Stephane Grappelli
Stefan Grossman
Gryphon
Woody Guthrie
Lightnin' Hopkins
The Humblebums
Bert Jansch
Blind Lemon Jefferson
Alexis Korner
Leadbelly
Ralph McTell
Mr Fox/Bob Pegg
Pentangle
John Renbourn
Django Reinhardt
Buddy Rich
Sonny Rollins
Joshua Rifkin
McCoy Tyner
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GB: A lot of the stuff from the first album.... 'Conquistador' and so on.

ZZ: When was 'A Whiter Shade Of Pale' written?

GB: In the early part of 1967. Keith and I had written about fifteen songs together, and nothing was happening - so he said to me "we'll have to get a group together and do them ourselves". I said "oh, no" and, in fact, I almost joined Dusty Springfield.... I was all set to become one of her Echoes, but at the last minute, I decided to have a go at getting our own group together - even though we had absolutely no backing moneyswise. We knew what sort of sound we wanted, what instruments were needed, and what sort of format we required.... all of this as a result of discussions with Guy Stevens. We decided that we wanted piano AND organ - and that would be the basis of the sound.

ZZ: Did you get that idea from anyone in particular?

GB: No, not really, but loads of really good records had that combination. Then we thought about various people we knew, and I thought about Robin Trower - because another thing we wanted was a blues guitarist.

ZZ: Did you envisage the group as a grand mixing of diverse musics?

GB: Yes - all the things we liked, really. We put them all in one pot to see how they'd turn out, but also the thing was doing different kinds of numbers. People always think of us as being classically orientated, but there's really hardly any point at all where the classics have come into it.

BJW: It's just that occasionally a string section sounds nice.

GB: Anyway, we couldn't think of

anybody who we would consider suitable. I didn't think Robin would go for this sort of thing, because there wasn't going to be any Muddy Waters in it, as such. So we put an ad in the Melody Maker, for a guitarist, a bass player, and Hammond organist, and held auditions up the Tottenham Court Road. Dozens of people turned up - all guitarists and bassplayers - so we paired them off and just did easy blues numbers, to get an idea of whether anybody could play or not. In fact, it was a pretty poor bunch, and in the end, we picked a coloured feller from Birmingham, who was the best guitarist.... but he went back home the following day, so we got Ray Royer and David Knights on guitar and bass respectively. Then we had to start looking for a drummer and an organist.

Well, soon afterwards, we saw an ad in MM - "Hammond organist seeks work" - and it was the answer to our prayers, because not many people had Hammonds on the grounds of expense.... and if they did, they were usually in a group already. So we went down to see this bloke, Matthew Fisher, in Croydon, and played him a couple of demos, including 'Whiter Shade Of Pale', which we'd just written.... and he joined us. He was playing with Screaming Lord Sutch at the time.

After that, we tried for a long time to get a drummer. We had several in for a few weeks, including Mad Steve the Greek, sniffing all day long, terrible it was.... he could've been a great drummer. In the end, though, things started to come together on the business side. We'd made a demo, and the people that were publishing our music set up a record deal.

ZZ: Who was that?

GB: We were with an independent

company, Straight Ahead Productions, and they leased their stuff to various people - so the first single was on the Deram label, but then the company (headed by Denny Cordell) switched to Regal Zonophone.

The day we had the studio booked to do the single, Bobby Harrison came down. I'd remembered him from the old days, and he was the best drummer that had come along so far - so we asked him to join. By then, of course, they'd booked the session, together with a session drummer, Bill Eyden, for safety's sake. He had a little bit of a go afterwards; once people began to say we were a session group, Bill put his spoke in, saying "where's my money? Where's my fifth of the royalties?"

ZZ: How did you get the name Procol Harum?

GB: From a cat belonging to a friend of Guy Stevens! We were looking for a name, but hadn't had any ideas.... then Guy phoned up one day with the name Procol Harum, which was the pedigree name of this cat. Apparently, most Burmese cats have Latin names.... but when people started to ask about the name, and we examined the cat's birth certificate, we found it should have been Procul Harun. It means "beyond these things", which was a nice little coincidence.... it could have meant "long red tail" or something.

And so, my friends, Procol Harum were born. If you're thinking "about bloody time too!", I can assure you that we'll be on to more familiar ground next time, as we trace the group's magnificent recording career, through thick and thin, through triumph and despair, up to the present day.

Paul Kendall

NUMBER TWO OF AN OCCASIONAL SERIES

FAMOUS MISTAKES IN ROCK HISTORY

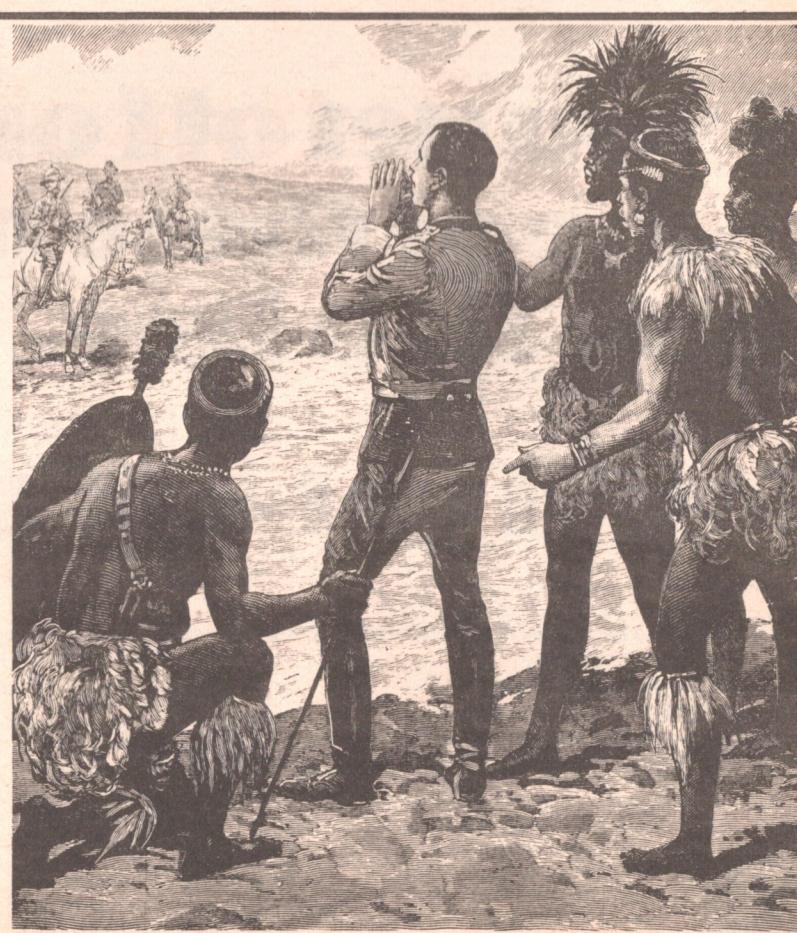
TONY STRATTON SMITH JOURNEYS TO THE DISTANT SHORES OF THE ZAMBEZI TO SIGN JO'BURG HAWK TO CHARISMA RECORDS

Jo'burg Manager (dressed up in captured British uniform for the occasion): Hello dere, Bwana. We wants £25,000 as an advance, 15% artists royalties, minimum guaranteed earnings of £250,000 over de next three years, an' unlimited supplies of ganja.

Stratton Smith (sweating heavily in the noon-day sun): It's a deal. Come along, men, let's get back to camp before those bloody porters find where I've hidden the vodka.



(Just joking, Tony, old chap!)



Nils: Can He Beat The Press

By KEN BARNES

stickers over the regular price so I could afford the first two Grinalbums; and I think the versions of "Beggar's Day" and "Keith Don't Go" are dazzling, not to mention the opening of "Back it Up," noted rockwriter/ A&M staffer Bud Scoppa's favorite moment.

Scoppa was instrumental in the bootleg caper, having by chance heard a tape transcript of the KSAN show, recognizing its spectacular nature, and in the first rush of enthusiasm planning to make cassettes to send out to other Lofgren appreciators. Tentative lists quickly got out of hand, so the idea came to press it up and quietly distribute it. The reaction, of course, was certainly quiet-saturation airplay, panegyric reviews, offers of \$50 for a copy - and the initial limited pressing ran out quickly. A&M wanted to meet the demand, but there was the new album to consider as well.

Nils Lofgren "thought it was a bad idea to release it right off the bat. But then I realized it was a good idea, a well-intentioned promotion." But A&M's idea to include the bootleg within initial pressings of his new LP did not exactly thrill him, both because of the insinuation factor discussed above and the problem of buyers feeling gypped if their copy was bootless. Other alternatives discussed were the inclusion of a postcard in the studio LP for interested customers to send for the bootleg, or (more likely) a new bootleg pressing to be sent out to

anyone writing an "intense letter" to the company requesting it. At any rate, it does appear as if, eventually, anyone who wants the bootleg is going to be able to get it, a refreshing sort of outcome to the problem.

It's not really a problem, of course - all that word-of-mouth and radio airplay is hardly going to hurt the reception for Lofgren's next album. But all the press he's accumulated over the years may not work so positively. Recently the rock press in general has exhibited a considerable degree of smugness and self-importance, in regard to its power to help propel acts to stardom. Most of the satisfaction stems from the recent breakthroughs of Bruce Springsteen and Patti Smith (though Patti hasn't yet reached the top rung), and it's understandable - a lot of writers devoted a lot of space to both, and lo and behold, there they are high on the charts.

But it's easy to exaggerate the press's role - recall that Springsteen got raves for his first two albums and the fireworks were less than spectacular. *Born to Run* had the advantage of all-out support from the record company (in part generated by the press climate, but probably more significantly by Columbia's promotion effort). Another critical darling, the Blue Oyster Cult, won their devoted audience by nonstop touring not good reviews.

The press does seem to perpetrate a delayed effect - all those articles on Free and Mott the Hoople, neither of which really made it big, created a climate favorable for the mass breakthrough of Bad Company - the

names were familiar, and radio and the public were finally ready. The same process probably worked back in prehistoric days for Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young. But let's not forget the legion of Big Stars, Raspberries, Blue Ashes and all the other press cult favorites who never really reached the masses because they weren't supported by record company efforts and all-important radio airplay. In fact, the raves may have had an adverse effect, as a lot of consumers (and a lot of rather smug radio types who don't like to be told what's good for them and their airwaves by any journalistic dilettantes) tend to react negatively to what they consider hype. As Nils Lofgren says, "Kids don't read a review and say, 'that's worth 8 bucks.'"

Lofgren, if he wanted to, could compile a scrapbook eight feet thick from the favorable reviews he's enjoyed since 1 + 1 in 1972. His reaction is diplomatic—"I realize it doesn't sell records, at least immediately, but I appreciate it." Most writers appreciate him right back, and since his rapturously-received solo album early in 1975 and his recent media-conquering tour of England, he's the likely candidate for the press's new mass cause celebre, with all the mixed blessings that come with that status. With the bootleg's reaction, the new album, and an upcoming (March) tour, it's make or break time for Lofgren.

But according to the man himself, "I look at everything as a make-or-break proposition. I like pressure. When I'm left alone, I stagnate." Further, "There's a momentum I can feel, you can't fake it." So immediately after finishing up the LP and recovering from three wisdom tooth extractions, he launches himself directly into the tour—college concerts, the Bottom Line, possibly the Roxy, "more concerts than clubs this time." Still, if there's any question he'll take the smaller venue—"I'd rather play to full houses at small clubs to get the energy than back up Edgar Winter at the Spectrum like Grin did."

"We're using the same band" (Mike Zack, drums; Scotty Ball, bass; Tom Lofgren, guitar) "but we're adding another guitarist, a local guy, real flashy." This should infuse the visual excitement some thought lacking in his band during Lofgren's fall tour, and will allow for more versatility from the front man. "Sometimes I feel like just singing without my guitar on; now I can do that."

Lofgren seems absolutely dedicated to making music, with a visibly passionate commitment. When he speaks of longing for the day he can headline any city, not for the glory and the fame but so he can afford proper equipment and enough roadies to

handle it, what would normally sound ingenuous (to say the least) is completely credible. He's very confident (cocky is probably the right word), direct, articulate, and his enthusiasm is contagious. So when he talks about his new album, you get caught up in the excitement, even though there's a boggler or two in the telling.

"There are two different sets of musicians. Half the album was produced by David Briggs, and that's hard and simple basic stuff. Aynsley Dunbar on drums, Wornell Jones on bass, like the last album. The other half was produced by Al Kooper. Some songs needed a...slicker production, and that's the reason I hired Al. He's into gimmicks, but I mean that in a good way."

How did the ornately-inclined Kooper, fresh from the certifiably gimmicky Tubes, meet up with your ultimate no-frills rocker? "The last thing on my mind was working with Al Kooper. He came up very intensely and said he thought he could help me. His production really added to it—let me put it this way: it warranted using half the album. I think it will be a good contrast."

NILS LOGREN DISCOGRAPHY THE NILS CUT-OUT CATALOGUE



ALBUMS
With *Crazy Horse*
Sept. '70 *Crazy Horse*
 Reprise

With GRIN
Feb. '71 *Grin* Spindizzy Z-30321
Dec. '71 *1 + 1* Spindizzy Z-31038
Dec. '72 *All Out* Spindizzy Z-31701
Nov. '73 *Gone Crazy* A&M SP-4415

SOLO
Jan. '75 *Nils Lofgren* A&M SP-4509
Jan. '76 *Back It Up* A&M authorized
Mar. '76 *Cry Tough* A&M bootleg

SINGLES

With PAULDOWELL & THE DOLPHIN
'69 "Get Together" Sire 4107
'69 "It's Better To Know You" / Sire 4107
"The Last Time I Saw You" [re-release]

With GRIN

Nov. "We All Sung Together" / Thunder
70 "See What A Love Can Do" 4000
Jan. "White Lies" / Spindizzy
72 "Just To Have You" 4005
June "End Unkind" / Spindizzy
72 "Slippery Fingers" 4006
Jan. "Ain't Love Nice" / Spindizzy
73 "Love Or Else" 4007
Nov. "You're The Weight" / A&M
73 "Beggars Day" 1502

SOLO
4/75 "Back It Up" A&M 1692
10/75 "I Don't Want To Know" UKA&M

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PHONOGRAPH RECORD

For the Kooper sessions, Jim Gordon, Chuck Rainey and Paul Stallworth were brought in for drums and bass, along with background singers, chorales, full orchestration, "more of everything." If that sounds foreboding to fans of the direct Lofgren rock & roll approach (and it does), Nils hastens to allay the doubts. "Coloring is what we're talking about here. The whole album is surprisingly unified. I would never have thought of using moog synthesizer, but Al plays it really tastefully, it works real well. I think this is the first time there was no problem with Kooper feeling superior musically to the artist," he goes on, conjuring up an amusing (and probably accurate) picture of Kooper grabbing instruments forcibly out of musicians' hands and painstakingly demonstrating the riff he wants. Lofgren emphasizes, though, "It is my record—the final production is subject to my approval. It won't be Al Kooper's five songs where he can do what he wants with Nils Lofgren's talents. I think it's a lot better than the first album—I look at it as my second album, even if some people think of it as my sixth. I've been very technically-minded about records, but this time sometimes I sing straight through songs, instead of taking it a verse at a time. I finally realized it's all emotion..."

At this writing I haven't yet heard the album—we're planning to squeeze a boxed impression of the final mix before this goes to press, and you'll know as soon as I do whether we succeeded. But there is one intriguing track that in all likelihood won't be on the LP—a full production version of Sandie Shaw's "Girl Don't Come."

"I love it," says Nils, "but I hope I don't have to use it. I don't think it should be on this record. Maybe it'll up the audience I've worked five years to build up, small as it is, to play to the new one," presumably as some sort of male Linda Ronstadt updating oldies, "or else keep the old audience and lose the new one right away. The track'll be valid any time..." Possibly as a future B-side...

So it's almost time for the big push. Lofgren is ready—"I can't wait to go back on the road—to me rock & roll is total release." He's determined to get his act in front of audiences, to become an actual presence rather than a cultish phantom of the press, and with that attitude I think he'll go over the top this time. As Tom Nolan succinctly put it last issue, "Nils Lofgren...seems caught in that limbo where critics love you and record buyers don't know your name." The next album and tour should change all that—limbo rock is the wrong style for anyone as gifted as Nils Lofgren.

and recycling the vinyl. Recording that album was a real party; it was like a live gig, and we had this big cafeteria table in the studio—one end was loaded up with food, drink, wine, fruit juice whatever you wanted, and the other end had about 3 kilos of grass loads of hash and we just played. Played a while, then take a break and get totally off the wall and play some more. Like the sax player would go up and roll a jam while the guitar player was taking a solo...that's the way it was done. The technique was unusual, but it really allowed us to get a feel on the album...it's my favorite, without a doubt...we also had 6 artists jamming to design the sleeve—but one of them got too bizarre and a rude word got onto the cover.... Capitol saw it and freaked—but only after the album had been released. It was our fault really, and it was a silly mistake...it cost us over 10,000 dollars; they had to punch out the offending word...because I was still legally involved in a 50% contract with Frank Werber, we had a policy of deliberate anonymity...no names, no photos, a sleeve devoid of information, and all the tunes credited to the authorship of B.B. Heavy. Actually, they were supposed to be an insert with all the information, but it was missed out—

for "Some mysterious reason." The band was still Champlin/Haggerty/Strong/Caine/Bowen and Palmer, we had a trumpet called Dean, but he flipped out on LSD 2 days before the session...we came back and played on the second album through.

The title of the album was also changed our name—shortened it to "The Songs Of Champlin" and that was also the title of the album (SKAO 332 - November 1969). It was produced by John Pardino at Capitol, and though the tunes are real nice, it would have been better if we'd done it live....as far as musical content goes, that was some of the best stuff we've come up with. The first one had the feeling, and this one had the material and arrangements—but it just had dry tones. That's why Michael Stewart is here today; we want to talk about production, because that seems to be where we fell down...we need a perfect producer, I think...George Martin would do—as long as he brought his cello along—or a real down-home rock-it-to-me bigger from Memphis. Recording wise, the best ever heard were Motown and stax.

The Songs Of Champlin

With the recent release of a brand new Sons of Champlin album, the time is obviously right to whisk out an interview with Bill Champlin, back in November 1973...sitting in the smog of his room at the Continental Hyatt House on Sunset Strip, where the band was staying during their string of gigs at the Roxy. "I'll let Champlin do all the talking— it's so much easier that way."

"From late 1965 until 1967, the sax player from the first Sons, Tim Caine, and I were in a band called THE OPPOSITE SIX, which were really heavily into the R&B scene—dance steps, codes and ties, uniforms...the whole thing. We were doing Stax, Motown and James Brown Stuff, with arranged horn parts and all the rest of it, as a time when very few white bands were into it. It was an area dominated by the Memphis and Atlanta black bands—I think that the only white guys to succeed at it nationally were the Righteous Brothers. Anyway, we tried pretty hard, until the draft board wiped out our personnel.....most of the guys got drafted."

"So Tim and I got together with Terry Haggerty, who lived just down the street from Tim....and we started up another band, doing Beatles and Stones material. We were originally called THE MASTERBEATS but then we changed our name to the ROCK-STAR TRAP!...we started playing pretty hard, and these guys came along and showed us a little more...they turned us on to acid, gave us a whole lot of love, and moved us in a wholly different direction. We were still playing our music, but we were guided to another space."

"AT THAT POINT, WE ALL DECIDED THAT WE WERE STONE CRAZY....AND THAT'S WHERE WE ARE NOW".

"Frank wanted us to clean up our image and get it straight—and we didn't want to be anything other than the way we were....so we found a couple of good dealers with great grass, and haircuts were abandoned. By this time, of course, our music had changed considerably....as a result of acid, all our songs had gone whoooooo

"Ever since then, I guess we've pretty much stuck...in fact, I'd go as far as to say that we're bagged—people say we're in the bag...and we all believe in these expectations...from record companies who want us to fail for the commercial hype? MY MUSIC COMES FROM THE HEART!—AND THAT'S IT."

"Anyway, back to the story, we left New York and eventually signed up with Capitol Records, who released our first album in August 1969, (LOOSEN UP NATURALLY) on Capitol SWBB 200—a double album. For me, it's the bible level. A lot of people think that album is just a soulful Motherfucker but that didn't stop Capitol from getting it, calling back all the unsold copies

The Songs Of Champlin

One of the big entrepreneurs operating locally was a guy called Frank Werber, who was managing the Kingston Trio, We Five, the Mystery Trend, Blackburn and Snow...and we signed with him—not what you'd call a particularly adventurous contact from our point of view, but we were just a bunch of naive young kids and we signed gladly.

"Whilst with him, the only record released was a single "Sing me a rainbow" in April 1967...."Sing me a rainbow" is a whole album, which is still in the can, actually, as far as I know, unreleased...actually, as far as I know, the masters have been lost now, but we spent around 400 hours in the studio, working on it, and getting our chops together. During that period, the line-up was Bill Champlin on guitar and vocals, Jim Myers and Bill Bowden on drums, Terry Haggerty on lead guitar, Tim Caine on saxophones, Al Strong on bass, and Geoff Palmer on keyboards.

"Well, the album never got released, and we began to go through a few changes....Jim Myers went into the service, and we began to year away from Mr. Werber....we ran into a new manager,

"Four months after 'The Sons' came out, we broke up...that was in March 1970. We were just downhearted about the scene - the dancehalls had become a drag, and we had internal problems...we were all sick of each other, sick of the trip, disillusioned, going out on the road, eating hamburgers...all of a sudden it soured up on us. So we released a limited edition of a live album (500 copies) called 'MINUS SEEDS AND STEMS', which was a disaster in terms of quality, but great in terms of feel." So we quit for almost a year, to slow down long enough to realise that we ought to get our heads out of the clouds and face reality. We were space cases...TOO MUCH MARIJUANA AND LSD. AND NOT ENOUGH REALITY."

"I joined another Marin County band called the

Rhythm Dukies

- they tended to have a floating personnel, and spent much more time up on their ranch in Santa Cruz, than we ever did on gigs. We made no assertions about our prowess...we just had a good time - it was another head-in-the-clouds, not worrying about 'gig-trip'...but, it was great. Whilst I was with them, which was only about 4 months, the other guys were Jerry Miller from Moxy Grape, Ordinge, who'd drummed very briefly with The Sons, and a bass player called John Barrett...he was one of the funkiest dudes in the world; he may not be the best bass player, but if your motorcycle ever needs fixing - he's your man....a real soulful brother.

"After that, I kind of drifted into the NU-BOOGALOO EXPRESS

which was another Marin County band that Terry Haggerty and Geoff Palmer had got together with David Gets from Big Brother and the Holding Company. That was another band with a floating personnel - David Gets left before it broke up - he got spaced out for a while then joined Country Paladino. That was called FOLLOW YOUR HEART (ST-675, April 1971), and we went in to record a third album for Capitol Records - again produced by John Palmer. By that time, we were down to five people: Champion / Haggerty / Palmer / Strong and Bowen. Tim Caine had gone off on his own trip - he now has two kids, a big vegetable garden,

"Towards the end of 1970, the Nu Boogaloo

got to find a good producer - one we respect and can work with....and we are a choosey bunch - we're considering Mike Stewart, or Jerry Roll from the Electric Flag, but we have other ideas too.

(In fact, for the new album, 'THE SONS OF CHAMPION', Emi / Ariola American, AAS 1501 - they used Bruce Walford, who produced 'LOSEN UP' NATURALLY, who produced 'OPEN UP' NATURALLY, the Sons spent most of early 1974 rehearsing prior to nationwide concert performances with the Band, the Eagles, Leon Russell, Linda Ronstadt, the Allman Brothers etc. The

new album was originally released on their own label, Gold Mine Records, in March 1975. It sold over 20,000 copies before American picked it up for worldwide distribution. I am unable to confirm it, but I understand that the Sons now enjoy the patronage of a couple of Philanthropic millionaires.)

"So here we sit, high above Hollywood, and I have to say, 'if you don't know it already, that the whole Sunset Strip vibe is plastic.' We were raised in a levis and workshirt vibration - just a laid back scene with 30 miles of wilderness state

lucky because we were with people who had actually gone the whole LSD circle...Snyder and Ginsberg - those guys knew it all and helped us through it, over a lot of hurdles where we could have tripped real hard and lost our energy. If you're moving too fast and take acid, you have a good chance of derailing...especially now, with the political situation the way it is.

"A lot of people had a lot to do with turning other people on".

Interview by Pete John



The core of the Sons of Champlin: PALMER / SCHALLOCK / HAGGERTY / CHAMPLIN

Yogi Phlegm

and a nice house with no electricity, "Well, things just weren't working out as we'd envisaged them, and in summer 1971, we went through more changes...we put in a new rhythm section and changed our name to YOGI PHLEGM

"Of course, before long we got a really bad name with promoters - we became a blacklisted band....don't touch those

"Before we cut another album, we've

The Sons of Champlin

and tried to adopt a more responsible attitude. That was in January 1972, by which time Bill Velt had left...so we didn't dig it too much, and split...so we got a guy called James Preston in on the drums. So the line-up became Champlin / Haggerty / Palmer / Schallock and Preston - which has been the core of the band ever since.

"After that, we spent a few months trying to get back in. In fact, we've been coming in and out for years...we never had a hit though - not since our first Verve single anyway...that got to number 7 in San Francisco and to number 2 in Salt Lake City!

As soon as we'd re-established ourselves to some degree, we added 2 horns...Phil Woods, Mike Andrews and Mark Usham, who are still with us and welcome as long as they wish to stay. I don't believe in having sidemen, either you have a band or you don't...if they play on any of our albums, they get the same bread as the rest of us."

"Early in 1973 we got a deal with Columbia Records, and our first album for 'WELCOME TO THE DANCE' (KC 3234), was released in July 1973. I could go through a whole list of explanations, but basically I don't dig the record that much.

"To begin with, we went in and cut the album independently, in a studio unconnected with Columbia - but that didn't work, even though we spent a lot of money. So we had to cop to the Columbia vibe, and we went in and did it with Roy Segal, who is their resident engineer...and a real heavy idiom desecrated us; we had an idea how we wanted it to sound, and he heard it another way. What we should have had was a producer who have prevented the kind of feelings which reared up, when we came to put the finishing touches to it, we were really down as a result of a family bereavement - but that we couldn't get away from it's sufficient to get the spirit and feeling we wanted. I mean, we are a mechanical band...we are looking to record a vibe rather than a sound - and our heart was stone broken when we cut that record."

"On the other hand, if you are spiritually orientated, the lyrics are there to enjoy.

"Before we cut another album, we've

The Sons

Express split up, and the Sons got back together...and Big Brother reformed to help get Bill Brother back on their feet was Michael Finnegan, who had been with The Jerry Hahn Brotherhood - who were a Scorching band, suffering from our problem of how to catch their live sound on record. But they were so good, it scared you to death...you had to crane your neck to watch them because they were so high....they sure were credentialled musicians.

"Anyways, from the end of 1970 to about June 1971 we got back together as

Capital Records - again produced by John Palmer. That was called FOLLOW YOUR HEART (ST-675, April 1971), which we cut in two weeks....a nice album. By that time, we were down to five people: Champion / Haggerty / Palmer / Strong and Bowen. Tim Caine had gone off on his own trip - he now has two kids, a big vegetable garden,

Park as a back garden. Lucky in one way but we got so far into that vibration that we had trouble relating to the business scene....I mean, I still can't relate to being a professional musician - I don't want to stop and ossify my music. On the other hand, it would sure be interesting to know the formula for a hit....it would sure help us to sustain our trip.

"Los Angeles! I wouldn't recommend anybody to take a hit of LSD in Los Angeles....not under any circumstance. When we first took acid, we were

"Oh my God! They've sold out of number 43 now! What shall I do?"

1-26 SOLD OUT

LITTLE FEAT: SNEEKY PETE AND THE BURRITOS. ARTHUR LEE.

50 LINDSFARNE: NICO NEIL YOUNG

51 THE DOCTOR FEELGOOD STORY. IAN HUNTER. NORMAN GREENBAUM

52 LOU REED. COUNTRY ROCK. THE STRANBS. JOHN CIPOLLINA. THE BURRITOS

53 GENESIS. PURE PRAIRIE LEAGUE COUNTRY ROCK. THE MAGIC BAND. JESSIE COLIN YOUNG. STRANBS

54 STEPHEN STILLS. ANDY FRASER SPEEDY KEEN. COUNTRY JOE & THE FISH. BILLY JOEL. CLANCY TODD RUNDGREN. JOE WALSH

55 TIM BUCKLEY. GERRY RAFFERTY BOB DELUXE. LEO KOTKE

56 COMMANDER CODY. BOB DYLAN FEELGOODS. KURT SCHAALS TREE

57 LOUDON WAINWRIGHT. VAN DER GRAAF SUTHERLAND. BROTHERS & QUINN. POCO. THE GROOVIES

58 RAY DAVIES. CURT BOETCHER NEIL YOUNG. CURT BOETCHER

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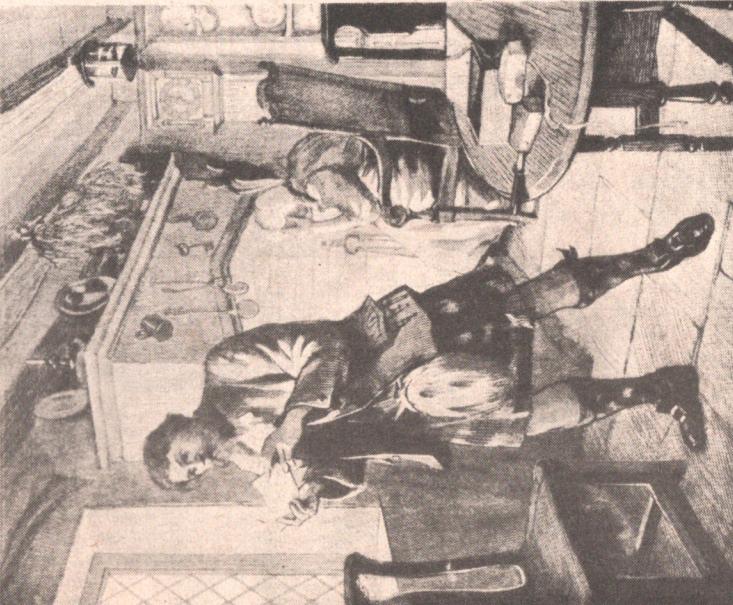
45 RON WOOD. LEONARD COHEN. PHIL LESEA. POCO. RICK NELSON

46 KEITH RICHARD. ROY HARPER. GRACE SLICK. CHILLI WILLI. RICK NELSON AND REDWING

47 JOHN SEBASTIAN. ARTHUR LEE. NEIL YOUNG. CURT BOETCHER

48 GENE CLARK. NICK DRAKE RAY DAVIES. CURT BOETCHER

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THE THINKING MAN'S GUIDE TO J. J. CALE

I don't know about you, but I find that there are certain records, in my collection, which I reserve for special moods and moments....and J. J. Cale's albums are a case in point. I usually play them in the wee small hours on winter evenings, when the fire is burning down, and bed is the next item on the agenda; or on lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer, lying in the tall grass while the music drifts out into the garden.

J. J. Cale's music fits in perfectly with those kinds of mood: the beautifully relaxed hypnotic shuffle of the rhythms; the guitars and pianos and occasional horns slipping in and out of the tunes like salmon swimming up a sun-flecked stream; the strong, husky voice, conjuring up images of back-porch bluegrass, cajun moons, and rued romance, complementing the weary, worldly-wise attitude of *laissez-faire* that permeates the songs.

After being in love with his deceptively simple, intimate music for several years, therefore, it was a bit of a gamble going to see JJ at Hammer-smith during his fleeting, first ever visit to these shores, and I don't honestly think it was a gamble that paid off. Although JJ and his band played immaculately, he is so self-effacing and so totally disinterested in anything resembling presentation or projection, that the live set really had no dimension to add to the records, and in the far from ideal concert hall conditions, that magic mood I was talking about, just didn't happen.

They make no bones about this though. Karl Himmel, the premier Nashville percussionist, who was with the Cale band just for the European visit, told me: "John likes to work clubs, where you get three or four hundred people, and you get them right there, wrapped around you. It's kinda horrible to play concerts like this one, where everything is so spread out. You have to rely on monitors, whereas in the studio you have your headphones, and can hear everything clearly".

In fact JJ usually does only about 50 dates in a year, although recently he's been getting about more, having done a tour of the Antipodes, before coming here, and he readily confesses to being a bit reluctant when it comes to live work: "I've always kind of flopped the idea of going out and touring. I enjoy playing live, but I feel more comfortable doing other things, besides going out. I enjoy playing in the studio; I'm not an entertainer, right, and I feel like I'm ripping people off. I just have my doubts about the acceptability of music presented the way I present mine. It usually works, but I still have my doubts".

As it turned out, meeting JJ face to face turned out to be more of an addition to the enjoyment of the records than seeing him perform...he really is exactly as you would expect him to be from listening to his music. The definitive slim slow slider, he is tall and lean, with craggy, weather beaten features and dusty looking denims that make him seem more like an extra in 'The Grapes of Wrath', than a star of stage and record. He talks much as he sings, too, in a soft, low drawl, which presented severe problems when I was transcribing the tape of our talk.

JJ Cale was born thirty seven years ago in Tulsa, a city about the size of Portsmouth, situated in the mid Western state of Oklahoma, and famous for its oil industry, and for being twenty four hours from Gene Pitney. Oklahoma's position meant that during his childhood, JJ was exposed to a variety of musical influences, both on the radio and on disc. From Texas, to the south, came Western Swing, via its most celebrated exponents, Bob Wills and his Texas Playboys; across the Missouri lay Nashville and the Grand Ole Opry, where country and bluegrass was booming; and, of course, all over the south, the influences of black rhythm and blues was felt - especially in the Cale household, where apparently JJ's elder sister was an aficionado. When JJ took up playing guitar, when he was about nine years old, these diverse musics all had their effect on him, though he is unable to pick out any particular influences.

"There are so many, I couldn't possibly name them all....just about everything that ever came on the radio, everything I ever heard".

By the time JJ left school, however, a young man from 400 miles away in Memphis, called Elvis Presley, was all the rage, and rock'n'roll had arrived. For the next few years, then, JJ played in various bands in the Tulsa area, bands such as Johnnie Cale and the Valentines, and Gene Crose and the Rockets.

"I started playing in bands when I got out of school. We'd get together and try to play good enough to charge money for gigs: we'd try to get a spot at the local night clubs, or at school dances....and at first, I just kinda did it on the side, because it obviously wasn't possible to earn a living off it - so I didn't become what you'd call a professional musician until a bit later".

By the early sixties, JJ had begun to write songs, and used to commute between Tulsa and Nashville, some 600 miles distant, trying to create some interest for his output, and he would play the occasional guitar session too.

"I'd just go up there and stay, some times for two nights, occasionally for a couple of weeks, but there's no night life, and outside the record business, there's no place to play in Nashville....no places to jam. So I never used to stay around for long....I was just a songwriter trying to hustle my songs, and when that didn't work, and I ran out of money, I got another job in Tulsa, in a band playing the bars".

Come 1964, Cale decided that the time had come to move on again, and he went out to Los Angeles, where he met some musician friends from home. "Work was getting pretty thin around Tulsa, and I wanted to expand - go to a bigger city....so I got together with Leon Russell and Carl Radle, who are both from Tulsa, and had been in various bands and jamming scenes with me".

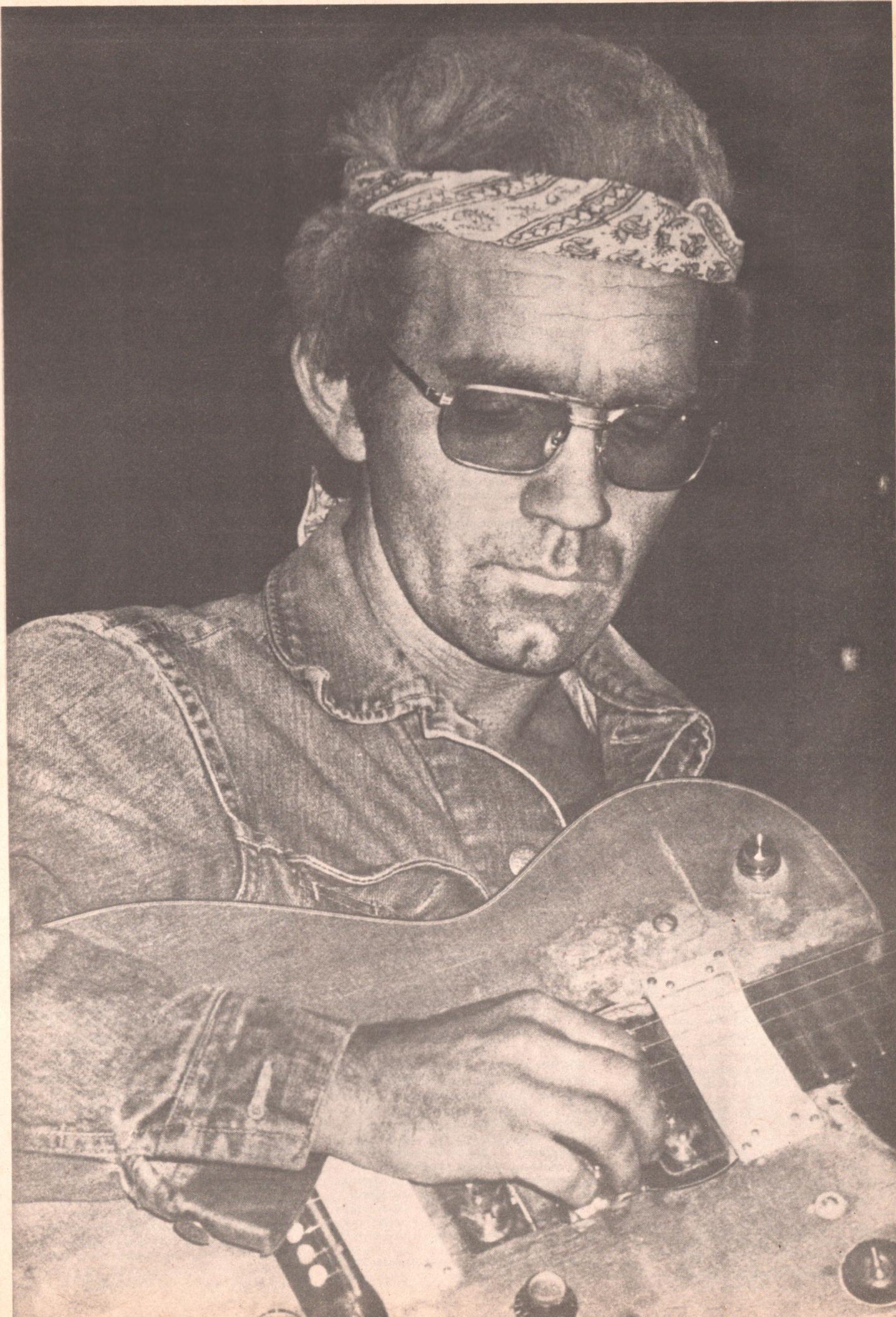
Leon had set up house on Skyhill Drive, and it became a kind of hostel and meeting place for musicians, and although JJ never actually lived there, he was a regular visitor: "I'd go over to the recording studio he'd built, and help him nail up stuff....learn how to engineer, learn a little about mixing techniques and recording studios generally. It was very useful experience".

To keep himself during this period, he was still doing gigs in bars, but they couldn't have been terribly rewarding: "I'd carry a bass player and drummer, and we'd play whenever we could get jobs - and, generally, if you go into bars, they want you to play whatever's happening on the radio at the time....so we had to do the current hits, and all that sort of stuff".

It all sounds rather depressing, so presumably JJ was pretty pleased when the famous Snuff Garrett, who had gone into business with Russell, offered him a regular job.

"Snuff had bought a recording studio called Amigo, and as I'd been learning engineering over at Leon's, he asked if I wanted to work as engineer at his place. I said yes, and for a while I'd sweep up the place, go out and demo my songs, invite my friends over, mix the straight dates...."

During this period at Amigo, JJ made two singles, which Snuff sold to the Liberty label - both of which disappeared, never to return....or so it must have seemed at the time. The first one was 'After Midnight', which I've never heard in its original form, and which came out in 1965. The second, released in 1966, was 'Out side looking in' and 'In our time', both written by Cale, and both typical mid-sixties West Coast pop, simply but well produced, with ringing guitars and strong vocal harmonies, and



very pleasant they sound too, as I sit here with the dew of an April morning still damp on the ground, and a hint of warmer days to come in the air.

Apart from these singles, however, it is not generally known that JJ also recorded an album while working for Snuff Garrett - so excuse me while I puff out my belly and put on my John 'Captain In The Search For Very Obscure Records' Tobler tee-shirt. The album in question is by a bogus group called The Leathercoated Minds (and you don't get names like that any more, do you?) and is called 'A Trip Down The Sunset Strip' - with OI! JJ credited with production, arrangements in conjunction with Bill Boatman, and also the authorship of four of the twelve tracks.

"Snuff wanted to put out an MOR album of the psychedelic music that was happening at the time, so he hired me just to get the musicians together. Bill Boatman arranged the horns, Bobby Keys was on it, I think, Jimmy Markham played on a couple of tracks, Gary Sanders, Gary Gilmore, Leon ... whoever was hanging out at Leon's at the time, really. Snuff just asked me to figure out all the psychedelic hits and cut our versions of them. I got eight together, but he wanted more - and since I'd been working on some guitar instrumentals, we used them to fill it out".

Even with the addition of those four instrumentals, which aren't bad at all, actually... the man obviously played a mean guitar even then - the album only clocks in at less than generous 28 minutes, but it makes for very entertaining listening as the musicians run through such golden goodies as 'Eight Miles High', 'Sunshine Superman', 'Along comes Mary' and 'Psychotic Reaction' to the accompaniment of street noises, allegedly recorded on location on the Strip. The renditions are surprisingly well played and produced (I'd expected the album to be a joke) with the exception of a quite awful instrumental, 'Puff, The Magic Dragon', which I suspect is more than a little tongue in cheek.

The best thing about the whole affair, though, is the sleeve note, which is a real piece of '67 media guff. "On street corners", it says, "hundreds of the 'beat' set gather to discuss everything from hip to politics, but foremost in their conversation is 'what's happening in music'....The Leathercoated Minds are typical of the groups that are bred and nurtured in Hollywood. They understand and feel West Coast music and have tried to pass along their excitement to you". Great stuff.... ranking with 'Can't Buy A Thrill' as one of the super sleeve-notes of our time.

Anyway, the album was released on Leon Russell's Viva label in the States, and on Fontana over here (TL 5412), and is a great curio item, though hardly essential for JJ Cale fans, but if you want to get it, your only chance is to burgle Tobler's house.... hold on, I've got his address here somewhere. The gentleman on the cover, by the way, is one Roger Tillison, accompanied by his good lady wife. He'd sung a couple of numbers on the album, and in 1970, he got to do his own solo album on Atco, produced by Jesse Ed Davis.

Despite these initial forays into the

wide world of recorded music, however, the Cale financial situation in 1967 was no better than before. "When I couldn't get a job playing with my bass player and drummer, I'd take work as a guitar player.... like Carl Radle asked if I'd play with Delaney & Bonnie, who were just getting it together - and for about 6 months, I did that, playing all these night clubs around LA for no money at all. It was quite a large band. ... Bobby Whitlock was in it, Bobby Keys, Jimmy Karstein.... the line-up changed about every two months, and right after I left, Leon joined them for a while".

At Christmas 1967, JJ had gone home to Tulsa and not bothered to return to LA, and of course, within a couple of years Delaney & Bonnie had made their first Elektra album, and his old cohorts from Skyhill Drive started getting famous - so how come that he didn't board the first Greyhound back to the Coast to get in on the action?

"Well, looking at it from there over the Rockies, I was so laid back, and so where I like to be, that all that kinda looked funny. I kinda enjoy sitting back, and had no desire to be in on that. I live simply, and was perfectly satisfied sitting playing guitar, and not being bothered. I knew I could figure out a way to get a job with a band, or a bar would hire me.... I got by".

Apart from the occasional visit to LA or Nashville, still trying to sell his songs, JJ stayed around Tulsa until the autumn of 1970, when his career was given a crucial and unexpected boost by Eric Clapton's recording of 'After Midnight', which was pulled from his first solo album to become a big hit single in the US.

"One night Bobby Keys had called me up at about three in the morning, and he said 'hey man, I'm playing with Eric Clapton now, and we've just cut one of your songs'. Well, I thought the track was bound to end up as an un-used out-take.... but a while later I began to hear it on the radio - and it was at that point, that Audie Ashworth (now his manager) asked me to come down to Nashville and make an album".

JJ had met Audie previously, during one of his visits to Nashville, and had done a little work with him, so they went into collaboration, using Audie's detailed knowledge of Nashville session men, and established a formula that they've had no cause to change.

"We like to travel around and go to different studios, to get the influence of those studios and the various musicians. I'll have a song, and get different musicians so I can see what kind of a flavour they'll put on it.... maybe they'll change the song around so it becomes more acceptable than my original concept of how it should be. You see, I tend to think along the same lines, using the same ideas, but if I use different musicians, they suggest changes and improvements".

Don't get the idea it's that easy though before going into the studio, JJ

does a lot of work getting those apparently simple, spontaneous songs into shape: "I write a lot, but the more I write, the worse it gets. I record everything I write, sometimes on my home tape recorder, or on a cassette, and I'll re-hash it maybe.... change the words, the music, the verses - I can tell when it's finished. I guess that I only use about 10% of what I write".

He also spends a lot of time experimenting in his own studio (says Karl Himmel: "If I had my choice of engineer, I'd have JJ; he's got such a great ear for mixing"), and toying with his much-customised acoustic guitar (he jokes that when he gets to be really famous, he's going to sell this wondrous instrument for a vast sum and retire); so his image as a lazy, laid-back country boy is somewhat inaccurate, but he is, nevertheless, something of a recluse. "He's got a trailer", says Larry Bell, his pianist, "and he lives about 30 miles outside of Nashville. He's got a farm out there, and if you want to see him, you have to drive 30 miles into the bush to find him".

Even the way Cale got his record contract, after recording 'Naturally', was marked by a laid back disregard for the way the wheels of the music business normally turn: "Carl Radle was in town with Eric Clapton doing a TV show, so I invited him to come out and play bass on a couple of my tunes. We had the demos done, but we didn't have any bass on them. Carl said he liked them, so Audie gave him the tapes to take out to LA, where he played them to Leon.... you know, 'look what Cale's into here, Leon'. Well, Leon thought it'd be a good idea to put it out on his own label".

Whatever arrangement JJ and Audie came to with Leon's Shelter label must certainly have been an easy-going one. 'Naturally' came out in the summer of 1971, after taking 9 months to record, owing to financial difficulties and the attendant problems of studio time. 'Really' appeared in late 1972, and 'Okie' in early 1974 - since when, we've been waiting for the new one, 'Troubadour', which should just be out by the time you read this.

When they recorded 'Naturally', JJ didn't really imagine there would be any more at all, and it was only when 'Crazy Mama' was a phenomenally big single (and the album successful as a result) that more recording was possible. Not that JJ allowed success to change his lifestyle too much, mind you. After 'Crazy Mama' was a hit, he was fixed up with a nationwide tour supporting Traffic, using old friends Bill Boatman, Gary Gilmore and Jimmy Karstein as a band, and he was so unimpressed by the prospect that he asked Don Nix to go out and impersonate him, so he could stay at home! (See also Don Nix story in ZZ35).

He's no different now. A man of quite startling humility, all he could say when talking about his recent tour of Australia, when he was headlining over the Doobies and the Average White Band, and his sell-out trip to Europe was "well, I'm lucky, I guess". Well, all I can say is, so are we.... long may his music delight us, after midnight or any other time.

Paul Kendall



There was no possibility of taking a walk that day - so, just for the record, this guff is being written in the laundrette in Winslow (Bucks, not Arizona).

I am sure you will be appalled and sickened to learn that my column has been cut to one page this month. Much as this irritates my rampant ego, I have grudgingly condescended to comply with these draconian measures - but only on the condition that I am given a page of record reviews.... which should appear near the back somewhere.

In this month's poll results, I have taken two liberties. For a start, I have decided not to print your choice of "worst journalists".... I mean, these people are Tobler's friends! Also, I have removed the names of Zigzag staff-men from the "favourite journalists" list. Certain members of the editorial board may enjoy masturbating in public, but I consider it rather unseemly (and prefer doing it in the privacy of my rat infested closet). I would, however, like to thank you for your overwhelming support of the poor starving writers on the magazine - sacrificing huge incomes as rich and famous writers on the weeklies (we've all been offered big-deal jobs), in order to bring you quality grist, with only your gratitude as reward. (Yes, folks, I won the Humility-ridden Snot-gobbler of the Year Award for a similar speech, delivered to the North Marston Unmarried Mothers Caving Society, of which I am patron and sponsor).

You will also note that there is a blank space for position number three. Giving someone the privilege of withdrawing his name from my poll results is not something I would normally tolerate, but A Renowned Journalist, hearing of his inclusion from a certain loose mouthed editor, asked for his name to be deleted on the grounds that it made him "feel like a fourth division team failing to achieve promotion"! Listen, matey - number 3 in a Zigzag readers' poll is a bloody honour! Anyway, I always enjoy your plume work, so I won't tell.

For this month's poll, please list the TEN ARTISTES/GROUPS YOU'D LIKE TO SEE FEATURED IN ZIG-ZAG - in order of preference. Then we can tailor the mag accordingly.... unless the results horrify us, in which case we'll retire. Last month's dead person poll elicited the biggest response ever.... results next month, along with the winners of the Mike Nesmith caption competition.

I am indebted to reader Adam Scott of Darlington, County Durham, who has written in to advise me that I have egg on my face. "You've been had, I'm afraid", he notes with glee. "Solomon Feldhouse says he was born in Sulaco in Costaguana (see Kaleidoscope

Part Two). I'm not surprised you couldn't find either place on a map, as Joseph Conrad created them as the setting for his novel 'Nostromo'. Gian Battista is a character in the book!"

I immediately rushed off to Weatherheads Bookshop and examined the Penguin edition of this book, and I'll be damned if the fellow's not right! The Turk must've taken me for a ride! In the introduction, Conrad emphasises the fictitious nature of the work, though he admits it was based on factual accounts. In the circumstances, I can only assume that Feldhouse had recently read 'Nostromo' and was merely pulling the wool over my eyes to hide the truth about his grisly origins.... but it does seem to be a rather subtle and obscure jest. I've written to Feldhouse, demanding an explanation (or an apology).

The Mike Wilhelm album has been delayed again - but it'll be here next month for sure.... or so they say. And don't worry, there will be copies for all who want them.

I feel impelled to draw your attention to two publications, the first of which is The Encyclopaedia of Rock, Volume One - The age of rock'n'roll. As Tobler says, "they've taken on an impossible task and have done the best possible job". Editor Dave Laing is a guy I would cross the road to avoid - in fact, I have crossed the road to avoid him - but even so, I'd be a cad not to praise the book. For the fact freak, it's indispensable.

Then we have 'Rock on the Road' (Rock in big letters for instant commercial identification), a collection of essays liberally sprinkled with the photographs of editor Mick Gold. In his letter to me, he described the work as his "cheapo cheapo coffee table book" (at £1.95, he's got to be joking) and suggests that "the polysyllabic pretensions may make you throw up". It's got some good pics in it, but we have no coffee table.



No Journalist of the Month award this issue - I can't readily recall anything which has stood out amidst the usual tawdry tedium of the weeklies. Keep churning it out, you bunch of hacks (and that includes the traitors Frame and Tobler who see fit to peddle their arses to the NME. No standards.)

OK, that's it. Please send your poll lists to The Famous Mac Garry, c/o Yeoman Cottage, North Marston, Buckingham MK18 3PH. Thank you.

The rest is silence. Mac

FAVOURITE ROCK JOURNALIST

- 1 NICK KENT
- 2 IAN MACDONALD
- 3
- 4 LESTER BANGS
- 5 MICK FARREN
- 6 STEVE LAKE
- 7 C.S. MURRAY
- 8 R. MELTZER
- 9 PETER O'BRIEN
- 10 ED WARD
- 11 MAX BELL
- 12 GREG SHAW
- 13 BERT MUIRHEAD
- 14 PAUL WILLIAMS
- 15 GREIL MARCUS
- 16 CAMERON CROWE
- 17 KEN BARNES
- 18 JOHN PEEL
- 19 CHARLIE GILLETT
- 20 MICK HOUGHTON
- 21 CHRIS BRIGGS
- 22 GEOFF BROWN
- 23 ALAN BETROCK
- 24 MIKE FLOOD PAGE
- 25 LENNY KAYE
- 26 STEVE PEACOCK
- 27 MICK WATTS
- 28 BEN FONG-TORRES
- 29 ALLAN JONES
- 30 BUD SCOPPA

PUNK ROCK COMES TO TOWN



FROM THE WINDSWEPT DEPTHS OF THE ESSEX MARSHLANDS, FROM THE BARS AND BACKSTREETS OF ROCHFORDLADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THE VERY WONDERFUL EDDIE & THE HOT RODS

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was Feelgood - or maybe 'feel good'....it's the same basic premise, really. Dave Higgs used to roadie for Southend's favourite sons, having played with Wilko and Sparko and Lee Brilleaux in different line-ups of a group called The Fix (all of which, as you might expect, is chronicled in Frame's huge Southend Sound family tree in ZZ56). Dave had stopped playing guitar for about four years, but one night he got up and jammed with the band, just like in the old days, and got a hankering to be playing in his own group again. An advert in Chris Stevens' music shop brought results, so Dave found himself taking the train out to Rochford, "a sleazy little town in the Essex sticks", just north of Southend, to audition for a bunch of kids called Eddie & The Hot Rods.

The kids rolled up at the station on their mopeds to meet him, and took him back to a garage for the audition - which presumably he passed, since he's still there today. At that time, they were "just a kids' pop band", with two vocalists - Barrie Masters and a gentleman whose true love, apparently, was pantomimes; another guitarist; Steve Nichols on drums; and somebody known as The Hustler on bass. With Dave's arrival, however, the superfluous singer and guitarist got the elbow, and Lew Davis, a friend of Dave's from the days of the Fix, came in to play harp (that's harp as in Sonny Terry, and not Welsh grannies, by the waywhat a ludicrous picture). It was still no good though, because this guy The Hustler had a penchant for winding his bass strings as tight as they'd go, regardless of the tuning. "We 'ad to get rid of 'im" says Barrie, "but 'e didn't mind, cos 'e wanted to get married and do 'is apprenticeship".

So, about a year ago, it was time for more adverts and more auditions, resulting in the arrival of Paul Gray, a young stripling of a mere sixteen summers at the time.

"We tried out about twenty blokes before Paul arrived, and 'e rolled up with 'is Woollies Japanese copy, sitting there trembling. We'd 'ad a few techno-flash wizards turn up, but their 'eart wasn't in it - they'd be content goin' out on Friday night and playin' with a pop band. They can't push 'ard enough if they feel like that".

Paul came from Leigh on Sea, which is sort of stuck on the western side of Southend, and, as he was on the dole, he'd been looking for a band to join - just for something to do.

It's a classic story, really, of a bunch of kids getting a group together in their early teens, for a laugh, and as something to do to keep them from getting bored. As time goes by, some drop out, some get kicked out, either because they're not good enough or because they've got the wrong attitude, and you're left with the ambitious ones, the ones with the ideals, which may seem hopeless at the time, but which lie at the root of most major achievements in rock music. You're also left with the desperate ones, who couldn't really do much else, and the ones to whom playing in a



band is far more compulsive than a time-filling amusement or castles-in-the-sky longshot.

By early 75, then, the pruning and grafting process had left Eddie and the Hot Rods as a five-piece....no longer a kids pop band, but now playing the sort of R&B (from Otis Spann to The Who) that Dave Higgs had grown up on. Dave and Lew were both older and more experienced than the others, so it's not surprising that they were the main inspiration of the group's direction. They played all unoriginal stuff at first, like almost every other band in the world, until Dave started writing; and they practised in a garage "until the neighbours got a petition up". No big ideas at first, just hustling local gigs, enjoying playing, and generally having a good roll.

"We'd rehearse three or four nights a week" Dave remembers, "really work 'ard until about nine or 'alf past, then we used to get out of our brains. We'd go out in the car, right....I'd drive, and the other 4 would 'ide in the back. We'd be doing about 25 mph, till some straight geezer came up behind....then I'd flash so 'e'd overtake. Then I'd get up 'is arse, and the other four would pop up wearing dark glasses and trilby 'atsand we'd really freak 'em out. They'd be doin' about 90, trying to get away from us.....one bloke nearly killed 'isself - tried to go round a roundabout doing seventy".

Actually, I should imagine they needed cheap thrills like that from time to time, and whatever entertainment they could derive from the young ladies (or "spunkers" as they insist on calling them), who used to hang around at their rehearsals, because trying to get a band off the ground in the wilds of Essex must be a pretty

thankless task. Their equipment was at sick joke level: "We 'ad just the bare essentials, ultimate cheapo stuff" says Barrie. "The p.a. for the first rehearsals was an old tape recorder stood on end, and we 'ad a £4 mike that used to go up to about 6½ watts and then feed back something awful. Then I went mad and bought an amp, and we used to borrow the columns off mates".

In fact, when I first saw the Rods last November, they were using a p.a. that looked as if Heath Robinson had designed it for them - a strange collection of boxes that has now been replaced by something more suitable for a professional band. The others went through the usual scenes with gear, starting off with cheap rubbish and graduating to Fender guitars and a Gretsch drum kit, acquired through parental loans that are still being paid off.

The band's occasional gigs were in keeping with their equipment - or lack of it. "We was just doin' silly gigs....pubs round Essex. We did all the little Working Men's clubs, getting banned and thrown out from every one. Every time we played one, there was a fight - that's just the sort of scene it is".

Mmmmm....nice. It makes you wonder why they bothered - playing to audiences who were not one whit interested in them, and getting into hassles for their pains. "A band's got no chance in Essex", bemoans Dave. "Like we were playing up at this place called The Double Six only the other night, and the main attraction there is the pool tables....they got more applause than us".

Barrie takes it up: "It makes you work 'arder - to try to draw the audience's attention. We'd get so frustrated from being ignored, that we ended up pushing the p.a. over and stuff....that kind of thing actually got them to respond, you know".

Aaaaah....frustration. The perennial rock'n'roll raison d'être that every critic/psychoanalyst mentions. At least it taught the Rods to project themselves though, and showed them ways to get a reaction.

"We 'ad this dummy", Barrie recalls. "It was Guy Fawkes night, and all the kids were getting a penny for the guy, so we thought we'd 'ave a fling. We made this 6'6" guy with a trilby 'at, pin stripe suit and shades - and we'd 'ang 'im up on a sort of budgerigar cage stand/mike stand at the back of the stage where it was dark. 'E'd stand there all night, with 'is 'ands in 'is pockets, and a fag 'anging out of 'is mouth. I'd go up and talk to 'im during the set, and the punters thought 'e was in the band. At the end of the act, we'd wrench 'im to the ground and beat 'im up. We used to call 'im Eddie - which is where our name came from".

It's just possible that the Rods might have been trapped forever in these desperate straits, but at the end of last summer they managed to get a gig at the Kensington, through the kind auspices of the Feelgoods, who were doing quite nicely now, thank you very much. Despite their unique brand of homegrown outrageousness,

the Rods didn't make any great impression at first, but at least they succeeded in getting some more work in the metropolis.

"We phoned people up about 20 times a day", says Dave, "until they got sick and tired of us and gave us a gig. It's extremely hard to phone up and say you're a member of the band, cos it don't look good, and people don't want to know - so I used to give them another name and say I was the manager".

Back home, too, things were looking up. The R&B club that the band had started up at a pub somewhere in the Essex backlands outside Rochford (probably so they'd have a regular place to play), was going well, and among the regulars was a guy called Ed Hollis, who'd been DJ on the famed Naughty Rhythms tour of 1975, and was an old friend of Dave's. After a while, he suggested he should take over the managerial duties from Dave - and that's what happened.

As the autumn progressed, things got rapidly better for the Rods. A residency at the Kensington led to a series of gigs at The Red Cow in Hammersmith Road, and appearances at other places like Newlands and the Nashville, and although they suffered the usual cool London reception in the early days, they gradually began to get a reputation as a piece of local hot action. Name-drops in 'Teasers' followed, and enthusiastic reviews, and soon the enlightened record companies - Anchor and United Artists among them - were taking notice.

One night at the Nashville, when the Rods were playing with the IOlers, the amiable Howard Thompson, who had just joined Island's A&R Dept, was among the audience wearing a silly grin. A little cautiously, because he was still finding his feet with the company, and because Island had never dealt with anything like Eddie and the Hot Rods, Howard put his ideas to Richard Williams and David Betteridge, his superiors. Unlike many other companies, Island believe in giving their staff responsibility, and so Howard was given the go-ahead, and shortly afterwards, Island acquired the services of Eddie and the Hot Rods to make phonographic recordings - a move which I'm sure neither side will have cause to regret.

Shortly after signing with Island, however, harp-player Lew Davis left the band, because, as Dave explains: "he was amazing, but he's had his lead in another direction. He really enjoys the blues, and we were moving away from that to more of an energy thing".

His departure, though, will probably help the band to shake the mini-Feel goods tag with which they've been saddled, and move off in a direction which, although very much third generation ultimate R&B, will be more their own.

Their first single, 'Writing on the wall'/'Crisin in the Lincoln', both original numbers produced by Vic Maile, does have strong affinities with the Feelgoods, apart from the obvious producer/geographical link, but somehow they seem to have managed to capture the power and excitement of their live work, where the Feelgoods, as yet, have not. This initial impression was borne out by the tapes I heard of some of the other



numbers recorded at Rickmansworth with Vic Maile, including Bob Seger's 'Get out of Denver' - a high point from their live set - and several of Dave's own numbers, on which Ed Hollis sometimes helps out with lyrics.

The live set at the moment seems to be a fairly even blend of R&B and punk classics - 'Route 66', Sam Cooke's 'Shake', and 'The kids are alright', for example - and self-penned numbers whose titles - 'Getting across to you', 'Keep on keeping on', or 'On the run' - give a fair idea of the Hot Rod ethos. All of them come on like a finely tuned dragster, accelerating instantly from a standing start, and speeding breathlessly over the course, which has no call for corners or refuelling stops.

Their next single, Sam the Sham's 'Woolly Bully', is being produced by Andy Mackay of Roxy fame, and naturally everybody hopes that it'll be

the one to break the Rods nationally -

but Island quite rightly appreciate that there is no desperate hurry about that happening. They're starting to look around tentatively for a producer for that crucial first album, but at the moment the field is very wide - though all the contenders are linked by a sort of 'beat of the street' affiliation.....

people who combine an appreciation of rock'n'roll tradition with a feel for its current direction and future potential - people like Lenny Kaye, Nils Lofgren, Sandy Pearlman and Murray Krugman, or even David Bowie.

Everything is very tenuous at the moment of course, but there are some tremendously exciting possibilities, especially when you bear in mind that the Rods are still very young - all in their late teens, except for Dave, and still developing both musically and in terms of presentation.

I'm firmly convinced, too, that the Rods are a pointer to a whole bright new tomorrow for rock music. In a time of economic recession, both financial necessity, and, I think, the mood of the audience, dictates against extravagance of presentation and

concept, and it is bands like Eddie and the Hot Rods and the Feelgoods who will survive, by doing something fundamental, and doing it with skill, style and energy, while those who seek to place themselves above their audience, with their convoys of equipment and their grandiose schemes, will go down the dinosaur's way.

Just recently, the band has been on tour up north, and has been over to Holland for a wildly successful week of performances at a town carnival, where all the audience wore pigs' heads! The word is spreading, and when they undertake a fifteen date tour, during May and June, sponsored by a music paper and a cigarette company, there will be no excuse for anybody remaining unaware of them.

It's all there. At a time when too many people in the rock world suffer from cerebral arthritis, Eddie and the Hot Rods come on hard and straight, with an uncompromising single mindedness, which is all too rare a commodity in these days of bland funk. One thinks of comparing them with the current wave of New York bands - the energy, the arrogance, the return to fundamentals is the same - but Eddie and the Hot Rods are different, because they don't rely solely on effect. Unlike joke bands like the Sex Pistols (who, when granted the privilege of supporting the Rods at the Marquee recently, repaid the favour by smashing up their gear, driving out their audience, and pelting them with bottles), they also deliver the musical dynamism which has to back up any rock dream.

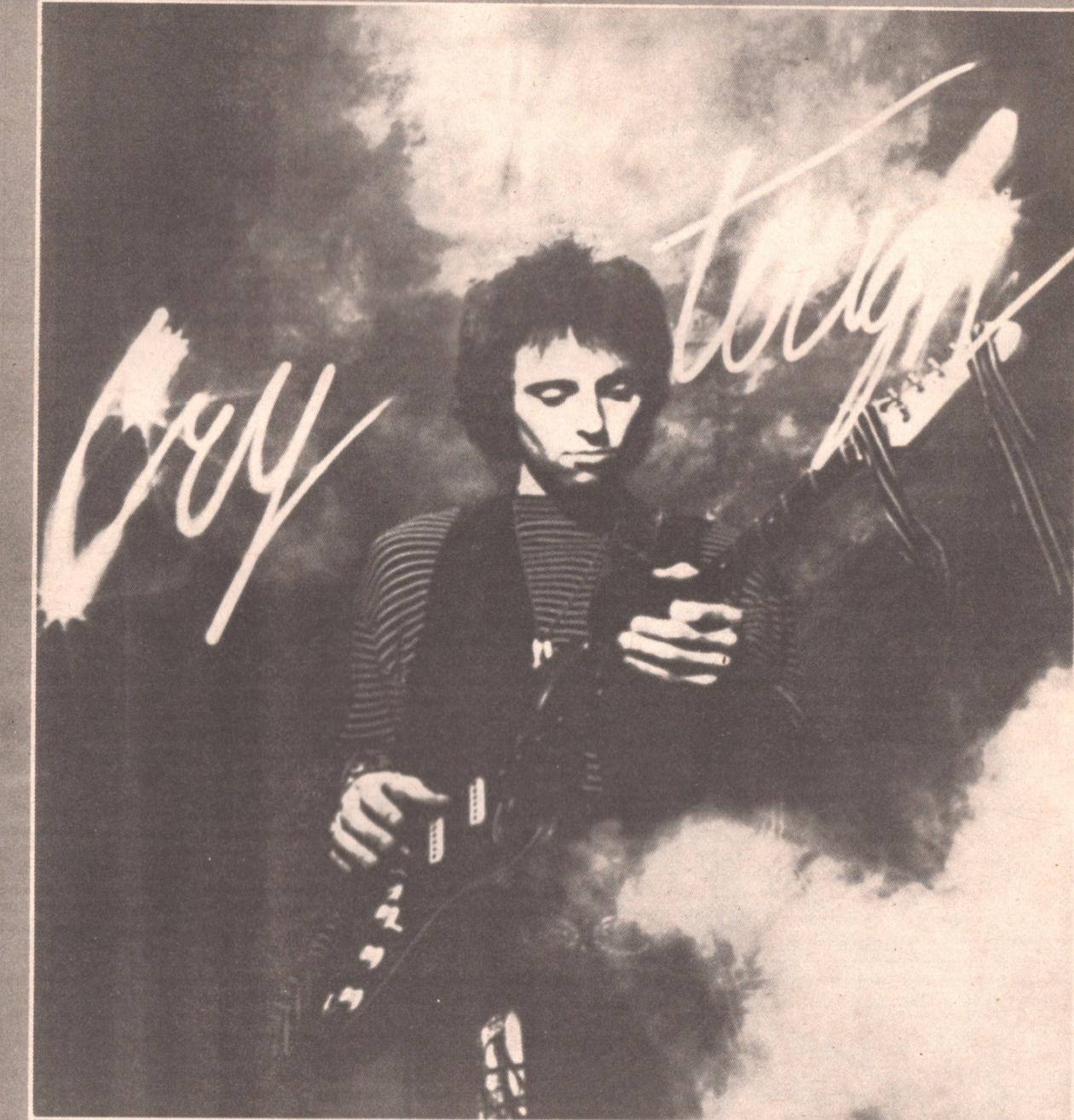
Steve Nichols' drumming is as solid as you could hope for; Paul Gray's bass rampages like a speeding rogue elephant, yet manages to be fluidly melodic; Barrie Masters is a great front man, and an increasingly strong vocalist; while Dave Higgs' guitar playing must make him the Bruce Lee of rock, chopping fast and savage in several directions at once. Couple that with the fact that they're young and they're hungry, and you've got yourself one killer rock band, for whom success is only a matter of time.

If a comparison is going to be made - and with a new young band, comparisons are inevitable a) for ease of reference and identification, and b) because their influences are normally more upfront still - then it probably shouldn't be with the Stones or the Feelgoods, who are the most obvious choices, but with the unutterably magnificent MC5. Not that the Rods have the same political cross that the Five were forced to bear, but they play a similar brand of short and sharp teen anthem, that comes from the heart and the gut, rather than the intellect (which is where they differ from other self-styled punks, like Patti Smith and Lou Reed).

Manager Ed Hollis reckons that when the Rods do get around to doing an album, they'll be aiming at the sort of feel that the MC5 got on 'Back In The USA', and Dave backs him up, saying that "basically, it'll be an album of singles". Well, I've been waiting 6 years for something to approach that, so I'm sure I can hang on for another six months or so - but in the meantime, I'm going to see them again.....

Paul Kendall

NILS LOFGREN



"Cry Tough - pull down your soul
You just need another shot of Rock N' Roll..."

-Nils Lofgren



AMLH 64537

ON TOUR

- | | |
|--------|------------------------------|
| MAY 5 | Bristol, Colston Hall |
| 6 | Birmingham, Town Hall |
| 7 | Manchester, Free Trade Hall |
| 9 & 10 | London, New Victoria Theatre |
| 12 | Newcastle, City Hall |
| 13 | Edinburgh, Usher Hall |
| 14 | Glasgow, Apollo |
| 15 | Leeds, University |

NEW FROM NILS LOFGREN ON A&M RECORDS & TAPES



- SIDE I**
- "I Found Out" (2:15) (BMI)
Lead Vocal — Saul Feldhouse
Lead Guitar — David Lindley
Organ, Harmonium — Maxwell Büdda
Bass — Chris Darrow
Drums — John Vidican
(Guest Musician Pete Madlin — Dubro)
 - "Greenwood Sidee" (4:12) (P.D.)
Saul — Lead Vocal
Dave — Fiddle, Harpguitar
Max — Fiddle
John — Drums
- "Recorded Under Derress"
- SIDE II**
- "Life Will Pass You By" (3:17) (BMI)
Saul — Lead Vocal
Dave — Guitar, Vocal
Chris — Mandolin, Vocal
Max — Bass, Piano
John — Drums
 - "Taxim" (11:20) (BMI)
(Recorded Live — No Overdubs)
Saul — Caz, Oud
Dave — Harpguitar
Max — Violin
Chris — Bass
John — Drums, Timpani
 - "Baldheaded End Of A Broom" (3:12) (P.D.)
Chris — Lead Vocal, Mandolin
Dave — Guitar
Max — Harmonica
Saul — Bass
John — Drums
 - "Louisiana Man" (2:42) (BMI)
(Recorded Live — No Overdubs)
Chris — Lead Vocal, Guitar
Dave — Fiddle, Vocal
Max — Fiddle
Saul — Bass
John — Drums, Timpani
 - "You Don't Love Me" (3:57) (BMI)
Chris — Lead Vocal, Bass
Max — Harmonica, Vocal
Dave — Lead Guitar
Saul — Guitar
John — Drums
 - "Beacon From Mars" (12:35) (BMI)
(Recorded Live — No Overdubs)
Saul — Lead Vocal, Gong
Dave — Lead Guitar
Max — Piano, Organ, Harpsichord, Harmonica
Chris — Bass
John — Drums, Timpani

"For 'The True Unprintable Story' behind this album; in addition to Kaleidoscope data and Fan Club Membership information send to:
Eisen & Goldberg c/o Long Hair Productions, 9000 Sunset Blvd., Suite 411, Hollywood, California 90069.
Arrangement: Kaleidoscope Production: Eisen & Goldberg Engineer: 'Ross'"

MANUFACTURED BY: EPIC RECORDS, CBS, INC., 51 W. 52 STREET, NEW YORK CITY.

Ket us now examine the second album (released in January of 1968, on Epic BN 26333, and produced by Eisen & Goldberg — their managers "who didn't really know what we were doing"), the track listing and credits of which are reprinted for your delectation.

As you can see, Pete Madlin (sic) plays dubro (sic), and the whole thing was recorded under derress (sic) — but those mis-spellings were of little regard compared with THE MIS-SPELLING OF THE TITLE OF THE ALBUM!

Fenrus, now deciding to call himself Maxwell Budda, explains: "The album was supposed to be called 'BACON FROM MARS' because of a line in the opening song which talked about 'pigmeat from outer space'. We'd done this great silly song, which I wrote, called 'The Universe's Mysteries'..... and Epic decided to leave it off the album because it had turned out far too long. We'd over-reacted to the shortness of the first, and provided over fifty minutes for the second.... and they chopped 'Universe'. Then they showed us the finished artwork for the sleeve — and we freaked.... we went up the wall and down the other side! 'A Beacon From Mars' had no relevance at all; the guy must have mis-heard some phoned instructions, and that's what he came up with. So, to prevent a major catastrophe, Epic persuaded us to retitle 'Stranger in your city', and call it 'Beacon from Mars' — even though it has absolutely no connection with the song".

The incident was one of the many straws which got piled on the camel's back, adding to the "derress".

Nevertheless, the album is a fabulous piece of work (this time over three quarters of an hour long), vastly more proficient in terms of arrangement, playing, singing and production.

"The track which ended up with the title 'Beacon from Mars' could only have been played by a bunch of guys who'd been together for a long time and were sensitive to what was going on, really involved in the idea of the band," says Lindley. "It was an idea of Chris's to take a lick similar to that of Howling Wolf's 'Smokestack Lightning', and work it over and over until it grew and bloomed. Solomon wrote the lyrics, and we all worked on the arrangement".

Darrow: "The track was cut absolutely live — no overdubs. I really like it Fenrus's harp playing is exquisite, and David plays some of the most remarkable spacy guitar..... I've never known anybody use feedback as effectively as the passage he plays".

I must agree. The track has its date stamped across every bar, but it whirrs along — with Fenrus blowing his lungs out and that bit before the closing build up always reminds me of Country Joe and the Fish.

'I found out' has a great guitar-picked solo, Sol's voice slides out like tarmac over the solid richness of 'Life will pass you by', they revive the Scat Band's 'Bald headed end of a broom', and play 'Louisiana Man' a deal less frantically than the usual Cajun interpreters.

Twin guitars and twin fiddles weave through most of the songs, giving Kaleidoscope that distinctive, unique sound.

"We used to practise our butts off", says Fenrus. "David was already well known as a phenomenal musician, and everyone else was working hard to keep up with him, and to maintain a personal image. As a unit, we got pretty tight at times".

"We used to switch instruments for certain passages — I mean, 4 of us could play fiddle, but Sol and Chris used to leave it to David and me most of the time we all felt our call".

And here I must confess that I'm ready to be swayed by Jimmy Page's eulogies about the Eastern track 'Taxim'. I'd never gone overboard for sitars, ouds and the like (as Kim Fowley said: "Gene Vincent never needed a sitar"), but this is superb — and Lindley, on harp guitar, is simply magnificent.

And what exactly is a harp guitar — is it that thing on the back of the sleeve?

"Yes, it is" says Lindley. "They don't any more, but Gibson used to manufacture them; they had the idea of becoming America's answer to Stradivarius they tried to develop instruments which would

fit into an orchestra, but could be plucked — so they made banjos, mandolins, mandolin cellos, mandolin basses.... all sorts of weird things. The harp guitar had bass strings which were used for drones — but nobody I knew really knew how to play one. I figured out my own way, by tuning the bass strings chordally. It was a vestige of a long gone era — they must have gone out of production in the twenties, but you sometimes see one they're still around, but very hard to find".

A lovely sound, and sparkling in the context of a rock band.

My favourite track is their version of Willie Cobb's 'You don't love me', which Stills admits was the source for the version he did with Al Kooper on the 'Supersession' album. Not only that, but the J. Geils Band's Magic Dick was "so knocked out by that harp blowing" that it transformed his style completely. Great guitar interplay, great track, quintessential Kaleidoscope!

And what about "the true unprintable story" behind the album? I asked David Lindley. "Oh, we were all very concerned because we weren't given enough money or time to produce the album we wanted to make — and we wanted to make it evident that relationships with the record company weren't as wonderful as they might have been. I guess it was basically that we were being pushed to become more commercial, whereas we wanted to go our own way".

Fenrus: "Over half the album was recorded live in the studio.... we switched instruments in the studio, same as we did on stage, and we noted the fact on the sleeve. That was designed to blow minds — when listeners realised that 5 guys could do all that at the same time, without overdubs. The last track was our suite, and we wanted to record it as well as possible".

Pete Madlen, the refugee from the Dry City Scat Band who makes a cameo appearance on 'I found out', is now living in Santa Barbara. "He's writing classical music for acoustic and electric guitar" says Darrow.

"He's trying to get a record deal at the moment. Did you know that he is now a decorated war hero? He was a pacifist, but got inducted into the army and was made a radio operator..... he apparently radioed some observations which resulted in a minor victory over the Viet Cong — and he got 3 or 4 medals for it. After that, he requested non-combatant action as a cook — and, for some reason, he prophesied that a truck he had to get on to go somewhere was going to be blown up..... no one believed him, so he put on his helmet and held on tight. And sure enough, it was blown up — and he was the only survivor..... he found himself walking sideways, with the first finger of his left hand dangling."

Luckily, a helicopter pilot saw what happened and whisked him off to hospital, where he had his finger sewn back together. He's gone through a whole load of adventures, and he's now an excellent writer and player. We keep in touch".

Putting out background details was none too easy — sitting as we were in a circle around the table. No-one felt inclined to go into their past too deeply — so I had to ask Darrow about them later..... and now is a good point to trot out what I haven't managed to work in already.

Fenrus is the son of a writer and music instructor at the College of the Nazarene, which is a religious college in Pasadena. Fenrus was a child prodigy — started playing when he was 4, and can play violin, keyboards and wind instruments. He was brilliant at school, but chose to amass the biggest comic collection of anyone I know. He's off in his own space..... I appreciate him a great deal".

"He and his father didn't get on too well, which is why he wanted to keep his real identity out of the public eye..... so his father wouldn't know he was playing rock and roll. So he made up all those names. Mind you, I don't believe that was the reason at all — he just used to love going under different identities..... he's a comic book character himself really. In fact, he actually writes comic books..... he does 'Mickey Rat' — do you know that one?"

"He really has it figured out what to do, and he does it. He also has a really big record collection ... lots of 78s; he's really into jazz and rock and all sorts of weird music".

And what of John Vidican, the missing member?

Vidican was a lot younger than us. At one point, when we were getting into all sorts of weird time signatures, we were going to get rid of him. We got as far as bringing Jim Keltner along to rehearse. Keltner could handle it with ease, though we found it adventurous..... and in fact our efforts with him came to nothing — because he was too good really. So John came back, and we pressed on. Actually, John was good; he was always trying to reach beyond his ability, which was nice — and he was usually able to cut it. He was like us; we tended to strive until we felt something confidently..... it was almost a religious experience for me, and for all of us, being in Kaleidoscope. We all learnt so much from each other, because everybody had his own different strong point, which was a source of energy to the others".

"John was really a hippie — an electronics freak. Kaleidoscope was his first band, other than marching bands and garage experiments".

With little gear (though Standell eventually subsidised them to a degree), they had been gigging since the end of '66, playing as many gigs as possible..... "Most of them were around L.A." as Solomon says. "We played the Ash Grove, the Magic Mushroom, in the Valley, the Fillmore, the Avalon, the Carousel, concert halls, love-ins, clubs, the Mt. Tamalpais festival, the Berkeley Folk Festival..... we did a lot of work, but we were in no way a financial success. I mean, when we were playing New York, over a year after we started, we were each given \$2.50 a day as subsistence. It was not luxury living, I can assure you".

Darrow: "I remember the first gig we did at the Avalon Ballroom in San Francisco; the bill was Country Joe and the Fish, The Sparrow (later Steppenwolf) and Kaleidoscope. I could hardly believe it; you could walk out into Haight Ashbury, and it was all beatific smiles. Now we can see it all much clearer in retrospect, but this was right at the start of the peace/love days and my memories of the place are incense burning, good music coming out of windows..... it was exactly how I imagined it was going to be, from reading and hearing about it. This was before it had developed into a commercial situation, of course. It was fervent, real, and very enticing — though I personally find Northern California too cold and damp; I prefer the sunny South!"

And so do I, mate.

Everyone travelled to gigs independently — they all had transport, including two Volkswagen vans belonging to Sol and John Vidican. Darrow recalls Sol's modus operandi. "We would arrive in a town, and chances were that Sol knew at least ten belly dancers living right around the corner — so he would round them up to come and perform with us..... and frankly, I didn't like the dancers. I couldn't see the point of it; it was unnecessary and distracting. I can remember playing somewhere in San Francisco, and this chick with huge tits was doing things right in front of me as I was trying to play..... it was just so disconcerting, and had so little to do with the music. That was definitely one of the reasons for the rift that began to develop between us".

"Sol really loved flamenco dancers and belly dancers, and he wanted to get more of a troupe idea — a big happy family travelling around together. He was really into the gypsy caravan idea, which didn't appeal to me quite honestly..... and, as I say, I couldn't take the idea of belly dancers gyrating to my music".

"We were all serious, but there was this underlying implicit humour in everything we did. In fact, the great thing about the early months of Kaleidoscope was that we were musically very happy" says Solomon. "Everyone had a strong point of view, but our aim was common; we all worked towards the same end. David was the leader, but didn't make all the decisions. We all took turns to talk on stage, and we got into a band consciousness..... but after a year or so, the unity began to crack".

"The root of the problem", Darrow reckons, "was a combination of business hassles, and the fact that we weren't a success commercially. The effect

was astonishing; friends started acting like enemies....and, in the end, I just passed. I said "that's it....I'm going", at which point David said "you're fired anyway" - it was he who fired me....wasn't it, David? So I quit and got fired at the same time. It just ceased to satisfy me all of a sudden - something had to give, and the obvious solution was a change of personnel".

So, after only a year, Darrow walked out of Kaleidoscope - only to be asked back immediately. "It was at that time that the group got the offer to go to New York and do our first gigs outside California," says Darrow. "they asked me if I'd go along and do it, and I agreed. It was 6 weeks on the East Coast, which I'd never had the opportunity to visit before....So I said I'd go....but I told them that I wouldn't go with them in the van."

Borrowing the money for the fare, I flew to New York, rather than travel the 3000 miles by road. The others went in 2 Volkswagen buses, and I understand that it was one of the most horrendous and uncomfortable voyages ever undertaken by any group - with one van eventually being left to rot by the roadside somewhere".

"When we arrived in New York, we were huddled into two rooms at the Albert Hotel. Some of us had women, there were instruments everywhere....it was awful. The Albert was in a real cheesy part of Greenwich Village - you could walk out and see guys coughing up blood in the streets" - and its "legendary" status was absolutely no compensation. To go from living in the middle of a sunny little lemon Grove in California, to being marooned in the middle of New York at the beginning of Winter just shook me to pieces....I was scared to death quite honestly. And I was ill too." I decided to get out of the Albert, and I moved into a room tenanted by an old friend of mine from the bluegrass days, Charles Zetterberg, who was studying law at Columbia University. He was living up in Spanish Harlem, and that was marginally better".

Lindley: "That tour was probably the lowest point in Kaleidoscope's career....we'd been hired to play at the Cafe Au Go Go, but the management just cancelled our engagement after they saw us play....they didn't like us - decided we were too far out. So they fired us, and we had to go and work playing at this disco place on 42nd Street....the worst". "We also did a gig at The Scene - we were second on the bill to Nico - then we went and played in Boston, after which Stuart Brotman said he could join the group earlier than he'd envisaged....so Chris left during the tour".

"I couldn't give a toss by that time" says Darrow, "and I just left, there and then - and then Stuart Brotman, who they'd contacted before leaving California, came in to replace me".

By understandable, I was pretty despondent at the time, but looking back, I have to say that when it was good - it was great....it was simply amazing. But personal conflicts brought on by financial stress weakened the ship and I was the first to jump overboard. I also thought that we should be getting into country rock more heavily; my preferences lay in that direction and it seemed to me that we could have attained more popularity....but David and Sol both thought they should become more Eastern and avant-garde - so we were at loggerheads over that, and that was one of the breaking points. Brotman reinforced the Eastern approach".

"So there I was, stuck in New York City without a gig....what a way to spend Christmas (1967). I was hanging around with Zal Yanovsky, who had been in the Spooky, and Bobby Neuwirth, and was going around looking at groups. There was a moment of real fantasy when Neuwirth, Zal, John Herald, Buddy Miles, Richard Greene and I were going to put a group together. Neuwirth had access to Dylan's basement tapes, and we

thought we could have a hit with an unknown Dylan song....but things never came together".

"Then it happened that the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band came to town - and they offered me a gig, which I took".

"Bruce Kunkel, a group original, was leaving. They were kind of Kaleidoscope rivals; a bit younger, and coming from a completely different point of view musically, and initially I was going to turn the offer down - but I was stuck in New York without money, had 2 of my guitars stolen, was sleeping in a minuscule room, and it was a real limbo situation....so the job saved me.

"I went to see them play at Hunter College in New York, opposite the Doors, and they really impressed me. Their stage presentation was professional and well-thought out, and they seemed to have a distinct musical direction, so I decided to swallow my pride and go along with them".

Kaleidoscope, with the memories of a dreadful experience, retreated to Los Angeles, with their tails between their legs - though they subsequently returned (to the Newport Festival) to be cheered long and loud by an ecstatic audience.

SDarrow: "John Vidican left not long after I did; everyone except John was getting better apparently, and they felt he was the weak link. He now lives next door to Fenrus, and he's working in electronics. He helped to build a studio, is involved with synthesizers, and played on some demos Fenrus made.....he still plays, but his real enthusiasm is for tampering with equipment. He was always 'the sound system/amp guy in the band'.

Knd that, as far as I'm concerned, is the end of Kaleidoscope; after 'A Beacon From Mars', their records just didn't make it".

Darrow: "Brotman, who'd been in an early version of Canned Heat, and the new drummer Paul Lagos, both fine musicians, came along, but I didn't think the group's material was commensurate with their instrumental ability on the third album. I really liked 'The Cuckoo', '7-8 Suite', and David's banjo thing, but then when 'Bernice' came out, I really didn't see what they were doing. I liked Solomon's singing on 'Slow And Easy', but the rest of it didn't grab me at all".

"By that time, law suits were flying about and things were in total chaos, as I understand....I don't know the full facts, because I wasn't there and I wasn't involved - but things weren't working out as planned".

No-one wanted to talk about the end of Kaleidoscope; Fenrus mumbled a few incomprehensible grunts, and Solomon gave me one of the longest coldest stares in the history of eyeball language. Lindley shrugged his shoulders, as if to indicate his having erased those painful weeks from his memory.

Unreleased Kaleidostuff remains in the can - probably a whole album's worth, if not more, cut during that first year. Darrow: "There are at least 3 other songs by Van Earl Shackleford, who wrote 'I Found Out'.....he's a Claremont guy, still around and playing. In fact, he wrote a really good acid-lyric song that we used to do. We tried to get Epic to re-release a load of our stuff a couple of years ago, but they refused point blank - and I haven't listened to the tracks in 8 years now. Tunes like 'Midnight in Moscow', we recorded a beautiful version of that, and the old Coasters hit, 'I'm a hog for you'. Then there are some great Fenrus-songs like the original 'Little Orphan Annie' and 'The Universe's Mysteries' - and a couple more lost b-sides, 'Elevator Man' and 'Rampé Rampé', and a track we did with Johnny Guitar Watson and Larry Williams - 'Nobody', which was Three Dog Night's hit.....that had David on harpsichord, me on bass,

Vidican on congas, Earl Palmer on drums, and was pretty far out.....too far out for the black stations, and too far out for the white stations".

And that, I think, just about wraps it up - but just let me examine the bits and pieces which remain littered around the desk unused. Apart from about 6 hours of taped conversation are the wad of notes, clippings and jottings with which Frame thoughtfully provided me for my Californian Sortie. Among these are the following: an article by our old friend Arnold Shaw (merely an expansion of his 'Side Trips' sleeve note), in which Lindley asks "Will my life be but mere numbers plus letters in the file of Epic Records?" and later confesses that he "was once going to be a Catholic priest - but I liked breasts too much". (That's the God's honest truth); another cutting, which brackets the group with Taj Mahal as "new stars on the horizon", talks authoritatively of Fenrus Ulf (yes, ULF), assures us that John Vidican's father was the Duke of Romania, and is tribe and ephemeral tribe from start to finish.

Then we have another bizarre piece which describes how "they pushed a full-size Hammond organ off a six foot stage while creditors were waiting to repossess it backstage". Claims that they were well known for "the chocolate sperm whale", their 1937 GMC truck", and maintains that they are "pursued by the ugliest groupies in California".

It also insists that the group started at the Jabberwock Coffee house in Berkeley (arrant nonsense), and subsequently performed "under names including Oat Willie and the Dream Band, Liquid Giraffe, Cowboy Ramar and his Bongo Boppers, Martha's Laundry, and The Floating Congress of Wonders". Not a word of truth in the whole shebang....all bullshit - I checked it out.

There's also a very exact and complimentary review of a Carousel Ballroom gig in San Francisco (written by Pete Welding in Down Beat), the sheet music to 'Bald Headed End of A Broom' (torn from Sing Out magazine), and a scholarly review of their first 2 albums by Jonathan Eberhart (also from Sing Out) which ends rather lamely by going on about "the mind expanding plaything after which the group is named".

Finally, there is an interesting interview with Lindley (done by Pete Senoff), which I would like to have reprinted here....but certain powers that be who seem to rule the roost around here, say I've already exceeded my welcome and should terminate this article forthwith. And who am I to argue with 14 stone of vile standing tuck?

The pages of Zigzag are littered with the wreckage of rock groups that never made it big. But they made it to our hearts, and that's better than the junkyard.

Suite obviously, I've barely scratched the surface, despite cramming as much as possible into my allotted page-space....I've merely managed to sketch the outline of the group's first year. Nothing about Darrow's days with Linda Ronstadt and John Stewart, or his solo albums, or The Rank Strangers. Nothing about Lindley in Terry Reid's band, his work with Jackson Browne and Crosby & Nash (from whose tour he'd only recently returned). Nothing about Solomon's Mexican Border Raiders, or Fenrus's "pizza house bands" or his years in Hawaii. And, more importantly, nothing about the re-formed group.

At present, I have only a cassette of the new album, which I'll review as soon as it's released - on Michael Nesmith's Pacific Arts label, any day now. And I'm afraid you'll have to wait a bit longer for details of my scheme to make 'Side Trips' and 'A Beacon From Mars' available to Zigzag readers. Keep your fingers crossed. Keep your legs crossed too.

You know what? I spent 6 days hanging around Kaleidoscope.....and (shades of the Lone Ranger) I still couldn't discover Fenrus Epp's real name. Still, I had a great time - and if you read this, thanks for your time and your hospitality....and best of luck with the album.

It was time to be off. Not that I'd overstayed my welcome or anything, but I had to get back to Miss Phillips' place in Los Angeles, and then a flying visit to Sparks, Nevada to see my good friend Mary Ann Siemer.....such a sweet and dear lady. MAC

Heading - Chris Morton / Scribe - Pete Frame
Record information:

Singles:

'Please' / 'Elevator Man' * Dec 1966
'Why Try' @ / 'Little Orphan Annie' @ Aug 1967

'I Found Out' / 'Rampé Rampé' * Oct 1967
'Nobody' * / 'Find Yourself' Nov 1967
'Hello Trouble' * / 'Just a taste' * May 1968

* = not on any album
@ = different from album version

Albums:

'SIDE TRIPS' Epic BN 26304 Jan 1967

'A BEACON FROM MARS' Epic BN 26333 Jan 1968

'THE INCREDIBLE' Epic BN 26467 Jun 1969

'BERNICE' CBS 64005 / Epic BN 26508 Mar 1970

'ZABRISKIE POINT' (two tracks) MGM 2315 002 Aug 1970

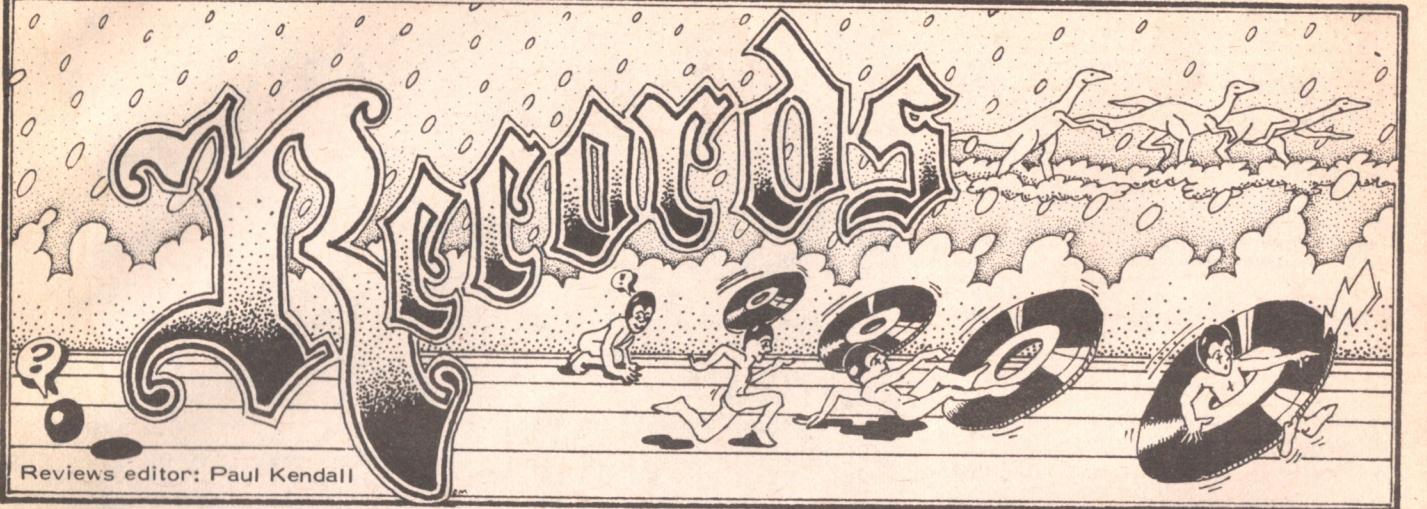
'WHEN SCOPES COLLIDE' Pacific Arts PAC 102 Apr 1976



Solomon and Chris at Devonshire Downs - Summer 1967. Photo: Terry Moore

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Reviews editor: Paul Kendall



'Old No 1'
GUY CLARK
RCA APL 1-1303

This record is a positive gem. However, unless some large quantity of record buyers pick up on it, it is destined to languish in the same obscurity which surrounds records by the International Submarine Band and Kaleidoscope, for example. In their wisdom, RCA have deemed that only a small quantity of imported albums shall be available, so it's probably down to ordering it, which of course lessens the possibility of success even more.

Anyway, to the record. If Guy Clark has been known previously outside the confines of his native Texas, it's as a songwriter. Probably his best known songs, both of which are included in ultimate versions here, are 'Desperadoes waiting for a train' (also recorded by such diverse talents as Tom Rush and the ex-Beefheart band Mallard) and 'L.A. Freeway' (done by the re-formed Spanky & Our Gang and also by Jerry Jeff Walker, who has used several Clark songs on his under-rated albums, and also wrote the sleeve note for Guy). As the production company involved, Free Flow, are also responsible for Jerry Jeff's records, it's likely that he was also the person who persuaded Guy to take the studio plunge - for which he should be grateful.

The Clark voice is beer-tinged, and not unlike that of his peers, among whom are Waylon Jennings, Willie Nelson, and Walker. If you don't like non-voices, you'll probably hate the record, but even so, the songs Clark writes are generally magnificent, full of Texan imagery and bar-room

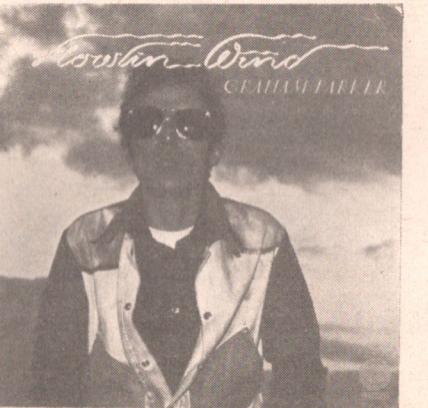
characters. Perhaps that's another downer to some people, but I love it. Apart from the two tracks mentioned, there are two other songs of earlier vintage; 'That old time feeling', which Jerry Jeff also covered a while ago, and 'A nickel for the fiddler', which I've heard before, although I can't recall by whom. The rest, 6 tracks, is new and very good indeed.

The two particular stand-out tracks are the first and the last on side two. 'Texas 1947' is obviously autobiographical - the story of a six year old putting a coin on the railway line, to be flattened by the express train which the whole town comes to watch as it speeds through their station without stopping.... and 'Let him roll' is a thumbnail sketch of a wino's life and death, and is due for several cover versions, I suspect.

Guy Clark writes the sort of song that Kristofferson used on his first (and best) album, and that attracted literally dozens of covers.

The backing is by Nashville pickers, mostly well known, and especially in tune with this man's songs, and among the harmonising vocalists are Emmylou Harris and Rodney Crowell. Rodney recommended this album while he was here with the Hot Band, and if that should convince a few more to purchase, then fine. Nevertheless, Guy Clark has an exceptional talent, and has made a record to treasure.

John Tobler



'Howlin Wind'
GRAHAM PARKER & The Rumour
Vertigo 6360 129

The album's on Vertigo - so you know the sleeve artwork is going to be dreadful.... and you're right! Ah, but concealed within this monstrous jacket (in fact, Parker's jacket isn't

too snazzy either) is what Charlie Gillett described as "the best thing to come out of the pub rock scene" - and his opinion is not to be scorned (even though he gets mentioned, twice, on the back).

Judging by the photo on the cover, you'd think the guy was dead, or at the very least an acid write-off, pausing to dig the sunset over Aylesbury sewage works on his way home from an afternoon with the guru. Categorically not so. The guy is bright - especially for an ex-petrol pumper.

On the back are pictures of The Rumour, with whom he's become closely associated: Brinsley Schwarz in his duffle coat, looking cheery, well-scrubbed and earnest as usual; Bob Andrews - waving gayly, or possibly dancing to Quintessence.... it's hard to tell; Martin Belmont resembling a Z Cars petty criminal; Stephen Goulding looking like a cross between Simon Stable and Chris Salewicz (ghastly thought); and Andrew Bodnar looking like a prefect. The first two are from the Brinslies, the middle one from Ducks Deluxe, and the last two from Bontemps Roulez, a great little swisher band who used to do 'Holy Cow' by Lee Dorsey.

Producer is Nick Lowe, and executive producer is Dave Robinson - so Parker is patently not stupid; he's surrounded himself with bona fide, certified Hope & Anchor guys, every last one - so what more can I say?

OK, boys, spin the record - take me on a trip upon your magic swirling ship.

It's good. A grower, for sure. The melodies aren't likely to put George Gershwin or Edgar Broughton into a flat spin, but the lyrics and rhythms are most appealing.... and the musicianship is ace. Twenty six years on the road in thinking bands have given these guys a polish and assurance what don't come out of books.

I'm not too keen on the horns. I hate the horns, in fact. But that's only because, during my boyhood, I spent many half hours having my appreciation of brass instruments retarded to the point of permanent distraction by weekly doses of the Billy Cotton Band Show.

My favourite track (out of twelve, all good) is 'Soul Shoes', which is much better than 'Rockin Shoes' by Cliff Richard but not as good as 'Blue Suede Shoes' by Carl Perkins.

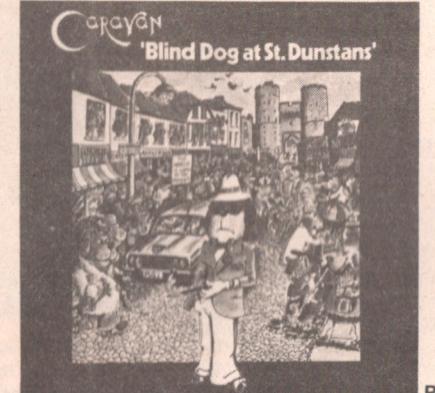
A lot of lazy journalists are going to say Parker's our answer to Dylan, our answer to Springsteen, our an-

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Monday April 18 Civic Hall, Guildford
Wednesday April 20 Queensway Hall, Dunstable
Thursday April 21 Lancaster Polytechnic, Coventry
Friday April 22 Free Trade Hall, Manchester
Saturday April 23 Lancaster University

Saturday April 24 Nottingham University
Monday April 26 Dome, Brighton
Tuesday May 4 New Victoria Theatre, London
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Sunday May 9 Town Hall, Birmingham

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swer to Van Morrison, our answer to and who am I to argue about such arrant nonsense?

The question is.... is his image strong enough to pull him out of the parochial Time Out/Honky Tonk cult circle and onto the front page of Melody Maker?

Jake says "yes", Nick Lowe says "yes", Kendall says "mmmm", Tobler says "maybe", Frame says "not yet" and, much as I appreciate the ignobility of such a stance, I must say "I haven't the vaguest idea".

But that's not to say I don't think the album's up there with the best of the month.... I'm playing it to death.

One word: the vibe in the music biz is that Nigel Grainge, A&R man at Phonogram, is going to be the Andrew Lauder of 1976.... i.e. he's on the ball and taking FLYING CHANCES on stuff he digs. Not only is he about to whisk the cobwebs out of musty old Phonogram and yank their image out of the museum, but he is sniffing around some HOT STUFF!

Enter Rumour, full of painted tongues.

Mac



'The Welsh Connection'
MAN
MCA MCF 2753

It goes to show you never can tell, doesn't it? Over the last two years, it had begun to look as though the once excellent Manband were fast running out of virility. Two studio albums, 'Winos Rhinos' and 'Slow Motion', suggesting that their efforts to establish a more song-based format were becoming increasingly less successful; various personnel changes that seemed to be doing more harm than good; a much touted tour with John Cipollina which went better commercially than artistically (in fact, I'm still trying to persuade myself that their guest was really Sam Andrew, masquerading for fun and profit) - as a confirmed Man man, I was getting worried.

Rejoice, however, and be merry! Cast your caps in the air, and shout loud the glad tidings; the Manband are back in action, and as good as ever! While 'The Welsh Connection' may not be their finest hour, it comes close, and whets the appetite for better things to come from this line-up.

Most immediately noticeable is the further development in the quality of the band's vocals, which in the past have tended to sound like commercial breaks, interrupting the main pro-

gramme of guitar work out of necessity, but which now have much more care and attention lavished on them, with every band member joining in, and several friends being brought in to help. That, and the welcome return of Phil Ryan to the fold, emphasises the other great improvement, which is in the quality of the material. The Manband's live set has become a bit predictable in its high points over the years - you know, 'C'mon!', 'Many are called', the old favourites - but I can quite easily see 'Born with a future!' or 'The ride and the view!' becoming staple diet as time goes by.

Structurally, the album is very similar to 'Winos Rhinos and Lunatics' - with four tight economical songs on the first side, and more room to stretch out on the second. At the moment, I must confess, it's side one that I'm playing most; it starts off with two dynamite Deke Leonard songs - 'The ride and the view!' and 'Out of our heads' - cools off a little with new bassist John McKenzie's 'Love can find a way', and finishes with the title track, a typical Man work-out, featuring fine keyboard work by Phil Ryan, who always seems to bring out the best in a Man.

By comparison, side two sounds a mite uninspired in places, but is invariably interesting, and unfailingly pleasant. 'Car toon' sounds like Micky's baby, and though it takes a bit of time getting out of third, it's cruising easy at sixty-five by the end, just in time for 'Born with a future!', which seems to be the happiest fusion of their new concentration on vocals with the old instrumental expertise, and suggests where Man's future may lie.

I've yet to see the new combo in action, but it appears that they're quickly getting to grips with the more abbreviated, commercial style, and I'm looking forward very much to hearing how these songs work out in concert, which, after all, has always been the band's forte. In the meantime, however, there's 'The Welsh Connection', which not only boasts much fine music, but also the obligatory wonderful sleeve-note by Deke, and a great new Man logo. What more could you ask for? Who said "some West India Guaranteed Pure Cane Treacle"???

Paul Kendall



duction (he did it at Rockfield) has given the music a lot of extra space and depth, with more than a touch of Spector in the massed backings.

The next track, 'Yes it's true', nearly knocked me off my chair when the first dense chords spluttered out of the speakers. It's an unashamed mid tempo beat bash, and a total gas from start to aaahed finish. From here on, the side rapidly gains momentum in terms of ecstatic listening.

Killer follows killer. There are powerhouse versions of 'St Louis Blues' and 'Don't lie to me!', both done with lashings of Cyril's Chuck Berry mutated guitar, which still has its old ringing tone. There's 1.40 of the Beatles' 'Misery', done at maniac double speed, and hot on its heels we have 'Please please girl!', which has the whole works - splashing cymbals, huge banks of guitars, and the great unison vocals which, for me, characterise the album. Cyril's guitar lines on this track sound like a more controlled 'European son to Delmore Schwartz'.

What else? Well, there's a pretty faithful garage treatment of the Lovin Spoonful's 'Let the boy rock'n'roll', and Larry Williams' 18 year old 'She said yeah' is a two minute blitzkreig of thrashing energy. 'Sometimes' is one of their down-the-line love songs

and emerged with a new style and image. They haven't changed their enthusiasm in making leap about and grin music, but the sleeve tells you all about their new direction.

Five moody 76 style Groovies stare at the camera, looking as though they've just leapt out of the window of a Carnaby Street boutique circa 1965. They're decked out in black tapered suits, cuban heeled boots and haircuts to match... and they line up as follows: Cyril Jordan - lead guitar, Chris Wilson - vocals, James Farrell - rhythm guitar, George Alexander - bass, and David Wright - drums.

The Jordan/Wilson team wrote most of the fourteen tracks, which are all in the two-to-three minute bracket, except for the four minute title track, which opens the album.

By the first chords, you know this is going to be a solid gold goodie! What about this for a chorus? "Shake some action is what I need, so let me bust out at full speed". The track does just that, with a great strident riff, maracas to the fore, and a beat not unlike some of their earlier classics on Skydog. Dave Edmunds' pro-



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- no pseudo-macho innuendos here! More often than not, the guy has lost his love, much to his distress, and, in fact, some of the best songs are the sad ones. On 'Teenage Confidential', a solitary guitar twangs in sweet remorse (ah!), while 'I'll cry alone!' is another tear-jerker with the same sort of desolate atmosphere as Dave Berry's 'The Crying Game'. Blubber-Rock lives with the Flamin' Groovies!

'You tore me down!', which was released as a single on the Bomp! label, is the perfect sampler for this album, mixing elements of Beatles, Byrds and Groovies into a glorious whole....there's so much in this track - not a second is wasted.

I've just realised I've mentioned every track but one... 'I can't hide!', which is a complete KILLER. It's the closer, an amazing burst of high energy brilliance with a two-note guitar solo which almosts out-Wilkos Wilko Johnson on 'I'm a hog for you baby!'

Well, there it is....everything you've ever wanted from the Groovies....now to get them back for a tour. And while we're at it, a big hand for Greg Shaw of 'Who Put The Bomp!', credited as Executive Producer, I'm sure he had everything to do with the realisation of this masterpiece.

Kris (over-the-top) Needs

'Cry Tough'
NILS LOFGREN
A&M AMLH 64573

So what do you say about somebody who is going to become one of the biggest stars of the late seventies, the man who is going to bring real youth and energy back into rock music in a big way, a man who has been recording great music since his late teens, and who only now finds that the world is ready for him? If you say that you don't think 'Cry Tough' is Nils Lofgren's tour de force, does it matter? Of course not. It's still great rock music, and if it is the album that breaks him to a wider public - that's fine. Hopefully, it'll turn the new aficionados on to the even greater first solo album, and especially the utterly magnificent 'I + I', which was virtually ignored when it was released in 1972.

Down to hard facts, though....enough of this partisan ranting (for a moment). The link between 'Cry Tough' and the first solo album is strongly forged by the simple fact that three of the tracks - 'Incidentally...it's over!', 'Share a little' and 'Can't get no closer' - feature the same team of producer David Briggs and rhythm section Aynsley Dunbar and Wornel Jones (though according to a recent interview in Phonograph Record Magazine, they weren't out-takes from the earlier album - Nils just wanted Al Kooper to do certain songs which needed a "slicker production....Al's into gimmicks, and I mean that in a good way"). The Briggs productions are well up to the standard of his work on 'Nils Lofgren' - in fact, has his name ever appeared on a bad album?

The prospect of Al Kooper taking over worried me a little at first, cos



All's nothing if not inconsistent - but he comes through with the goods alright here. The preoccupations throughout the album are classic Lofgren - timeless teenage sensibilities, concerned with the problems of young love, and the importance of getting another shot of rock'n'roll - and the delivery is unwaveringly ballsy....only a fool would expect less.

The Kooper produced stuff shows a greater preoccupation with arrangement, which harks back to the 'I + I' days, and it's particularly effective on the title track, which opens proceedings, where the use of the Ron Hicklin Singers is quite spine-tingling, and the more involved structure flows beautifully. Elsewhere, on 'For your love!' and 'It's not a crime' for example, it doesn't work so well, and the results have a slightly disjointed feel.

That's only a very minor criticism, though, especially when counterbalanced by the sinewy delicacy of 'Mud in your eye', where the acoustic bass provides a lovely bit of textural variety, or 'Jailbait', which takes the album out on a bouncing, strutting high. In fact, having listened to the album a couple more times while writing this, 'Cry Tough' probably is as good as 'Nils Lofgren', as well as a very positive move forward. I only hope that when Nils comes over in May, he brings backing musicians who give him the same sort of support that he gets here.

What it boils down to is this: while there's still a lot of very fine music being made under the broad heading of 'rock' at the moment, nearly all of it is veering more towards sophisticated artistry rather than primal rock and roll excitement. Nils Lofgren represents the very apex of what rock music is about - as a lyricist perfectly encapsulating archetypal young man's sentiments, as a composer writing great punchy songs, as a brilliantly talented musician and singer, and as a charismatic figure, he is among the very best we have (or will have). Remember too, that he's still in his early twenties, and that the best is probably still to come....the mind boggles. Paul Kendall

(In the) 'Presence' (of the bored)
LED ZEPPELIN
Swan Song SSK 59402

Do I have to come right out and say

it? Tell you that this album's crap? It's like watching four big guys swaggering down the High Street on a saturday morning, mindlessly musciling little old ladies off the pavement. At first you look on with mingled fear, admiration and disgust; then you either turn away and let them get on with it, or, if you're very foolhardy, you might try to step in and show them the error of their ways. If, on the other hand, you're equally insensible, you might applaud their actions, and encourage them to deeds of even greater stupidity.

It particularly hurts to know that these particular four big guys don't need to expend their energies in demonstrations of mindless musical muscle, though I suppose after the triumphant 'Physical Graffiti' and their disrupted lives over the last year or so, one can excuse this lapse. Not that it's bad, you understand - it's played and produced every bit as well as you'd expect from the world's premier heavy rock band - it's just that it seems to represent a total victory for matter over mind. For the first 40 minutes it's the unrelenting grunt'n'stutter stuff that I'm sure Zeppelin could churn out in a coma, and the last track, 'Tea for one!', is a pretty tedious blues workout that could well have been left as a studio warm-up, rather than taking up nine minutes worth of vinyl.

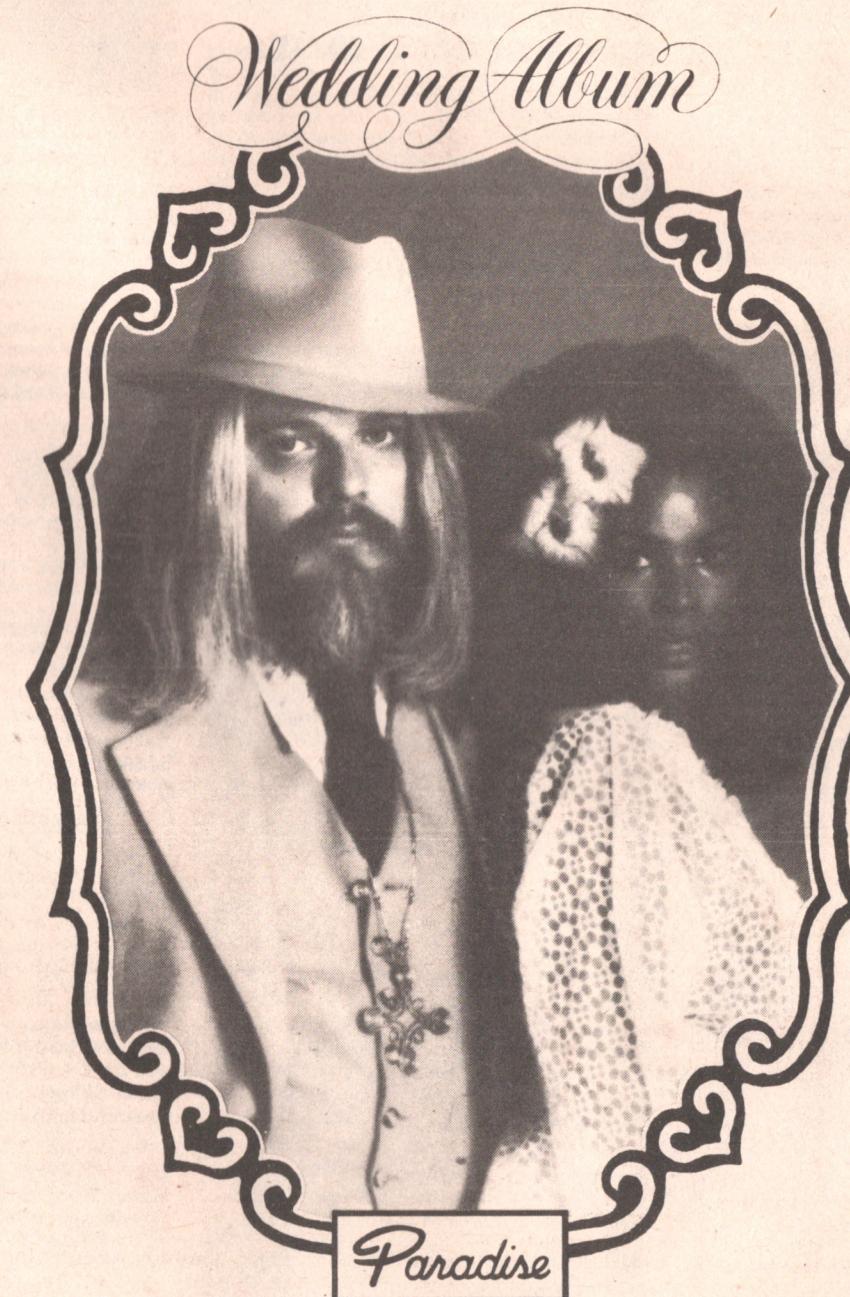
The much applauded 'Achilles last stand' is the album's best track (though I can never understand why somebody who takes as much pride in his lyrics as Plant does, should then render them almost completely incomprehensible), but I suspect it's helped to that accolade by also being the first track. If somebody hits you below the belt with a wicked uppercut, you tend to react initially, but if they keep on doing it for three quarters of an hour without stopping, you start to get a bit numb. After listening to the album several dozen times, I still can't remember a single riff, and you couldn't say that about 'Trampled Underfoot' or 'Black Dog'. Christ, even 'Houses of the Holy', undoubtedly Zep's nadir, had 'No quarter' to set the oil preliminary sensors twitching.

Still, I suppose that's the problem with lying fallow for a year in various corners of the globe, and then coming together for a month to throw some 'product' into shape. It's a brave attempt to make a sow's ear of uninspired riffs into the kind of sonic silk purse that one expects from Led Zeppelin, but it's doomed from the start by the very paucity of the material that they're working with. In fact, I'm sure that if the needle stuck in a groove - particularly around the middle of side one on 'For your life' - it'd be several minutes before you realised it.

By the way - if Peter Grant should decide to exact retribution for this splenetic outburst, I would appreciate being given time to bequeath all my other Zeppelin albums to my best mate, and to consign 'Presence' to the council salvage truck, where it belongs.

Paul Kendall

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The infallible Mac Garry guide* to all albums received for review

(Note to doughnut record company press officers who are so off-the-ball they haven't yet realised we've moved back to the sunshine and splendour of Bucks County: if you want the privilege of getting your albums assessed by our celebrated panel of expert (before being passed on to Kendall to consider the possibilities of a full review), you better send 'em up here on the double.... it's no use letting Tobier empty your cupboards - he's just got incurable advanced vinylitis).

PICK OF THE MONTH

'Howlin' Wind'
GRAHAM PARKER
Vertigo 6360 129

(See longer review) shared this honour with

'Old Number One'
GUY CLARK
RCA APL 1-1303

I always thought Kirk Douglas was a trifle too plastic, but I thought 'None but the brave', about a cowboy unable and unwilling to come to terms with the modern world, was one of the great films. I imagine Guy Clark finds himself in a similar situation - clinging to the vestiges of a bygone era, while society "progresses" around him. (Frankly, it's the kind of lifestyle I'd like to pursue, but Texas is a shade more conducive to such a mode of life than is Luton, where it looks like I'll be hanging my hat for the next few weeks). Making his recording debut somewhat later in life than most, he tends to come over as a pastiche of familiar styles - but the arrangements are economical and thoughtful; his songs are dynamite, and it gets my Pick of the Month (among Zigzagers.... it's not likely to give the Brotherhood of Man any problems). I'd go on about it, but Tobler's reviewed it elsewhere, I think.

TOO SOPHISTICATED FOR A SIMPLE PLIMSOLL LADDIE LIKE ME

'Second Childhood'
PHOEBE SNOW
CBS 81162

'Smile'
LAURA NYRO
CBS 81171

POP STUFF I CAN LAP UP IN SMALL DOSES

'Greatest Hits'
ABBA
Epic 69218
Will they ever make another single like 'SOS'? One of the all-time ace 45s.... I think I'll play it again.

* Guaranteed forthright, honest and unbiased.... so attempts to bribe me are useless (unless they include free trips to America for me and the Fire Water Queen).



ALBUMS WHICH FALL ON THE ELUSIVE SIDE OF THE WALL SURROUNDING MY LIMITED AND IDIOSYNCRATIC TASTES

'The Best of Allan Sherman'
ALLAN SHERMAN
K 56056

'Come as you are'
ASHFORD AND SIMPSON
K 56159

'Hazard and Barnes'
TONY HAZARD/RICHARD BARNES
K 56233

'Chocolate Kings'
PFM

Manticore K 53508
This came with a bar of chocolate which, I have to admit, I enjoyed far more than the album. Also, the sleeve fell apart due to slipshod finishing.... at £3 a throw, this is intolerable.

'Nanette Workman'
NANETTE WORKMAN
K 50223
(but I do like the sleeve)

'Home Cooking'
SERGIO MENDES & BRASIL 77
K 52030

Oh dear.... not a good month for the mighty WEA organisation, who won the Pick of the Month award in the last issue (Kate & Anna McGarrigle).

BETTER THAN MOST

'Live'
POCO
Epic 80705

'Texas Country'
ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL, WILLIE NELSON, FREDDY FENDER, BOB WILLS & HIS TEXAS PLAYBOYS
United Artists UA LA 574-H2
A double album sampler of the wealth of good music which flowed out of Texas.

Dateline: Monday April 19th 1976.... next month - Kaleidoscope's new one and, at long last, Michael Wilhelm.

NOT AS GOOD

'If the Shoe Fits'
PURE PRAIRIE LEAGUE
RCA RS 1040

Innocuously pleasant, but too homogeneous and formulaic.... not a patch on their first two (which are trailblazers). I hope Craig Fuller's new band is better - Childs (where is Childs? Has anybody seen Childs?) has heard tapes of their upcoming UA album and says they're stunning.

'Silk Degrees'
BOZ SCAGGS
CBS 81193

One wonders where Boz sees his future.... in clubs?... in concert halls?... in cabaret? I'm sure I don't know. Anyway, I'm afraid this isn't anywhere near his two pinnacles (the Atlantic album, and 'Moments'). Oh, what a self-opinionated git I am.

'Classic Willie Nelson'
WILLIE NELSON
United Artists UAS 29945
A selection of rather antiquated, Jim Reeves-style Liberty tracks, cut years before he burst out of obscurity. Interesting, though obviously not as good as his new stuff.

'Silver Linings'
CHARLIE RICH
Epic 69206

This guy's churning out albums faster than Andy Williams. I'd have thought he'd made enough bread to be able to slow up and bring out another classic on the scale of 'Behind closed doors'.

MORE OF THE SAME

'Taking it to the streets'
DOOBIE BROTHERS
K 56196

A huge hit in the States, of course, but for me the Doobies are just milking the same old rut - tiresome variations of their 3 great songs.

'Widow Maker'
WIDOW MAKER
Jet JET LP15

Nothing new, I fear, but I'm going to check out their live stuff next week.

'Presence'
LED ZEPPELIN
Swan Song SSK 59402
Their seventh album

From single of the week to album of the week in 7 days!!

Success strikes early for GRAHAM PARKER, 24, petrol pump attendant from Camberley!!



GRAHAM PARKER & THE RUMOUR:
Howlin' Wind (Vertigo)

NEW TALENT! Extraordinarily good new talent!

Not the Rumour, because they're not new!

Of course they're an amazing band, who — at least on the night I saw them down Dingwalls — seemed to be carrying fresh-faced Graham. In fact they're what's already been described as a pub-rocking supergroup.

Brinsley Schwartz's on guitar, organ, tenor sax and backing vocals. And the Brin's old keyboard man, Bob Andrews, is in here too, with the ex-Ducks Deluxe guitarist Martin Belmont making up the Rumour front line. And on the drums and bass respectively there's Stephen Goulding and Andrew Bodnar. No, the Mister New-Boy is Graham, lead vocals, acoustic guitar and bloody fine songwriter. Petrol Pump Parker himself. The young fellow who was guzzling out premium in a Camberley Filling Station until somebody decided they were going to make him a regular Four Star.

But enough of the biographical details; this album is just remarkably excellent, debut or not.

It's raw, packed to cramming with excitement and energy, topping musicianship, and a bunch of marvellously well-arranged songs.

You just have to turn to "Not If It Please Me", starting off as a blues busk by Parker on acoustic and vocals, and gradually building into one helluva climax as each of the band is brought in, for the point to be proved.

And I don't care if Petrol Pump rips off Van Morrison, Springsteen and Dylan. After all you can steal the wheels off a Mercedes and fit them to a Beetle, but there's no guarantee you're going to have a good runner.

See, the thing is Parker, with a limited voice which is as painfully cracked as old paint, writes some real whirly songs, sounding as freshly-baked as a new loaf. And they work. Work so well that even if he'd completely re-routed "Moondance" or "Desire" into his music I really wouldn't have minded.

Because, most of all Parker and The Rumour make you realise that although there's still a lot to be said for uncovering an actual un-derivative talent, music's to such a large extent ephemeral that you have to grab what you can while you can. And enjoy it. Blow the sources.

You can tell though that Morrison is a predominant influence both vocally ("White Honey") and musically ("Gypsy Blood"), while he has a penchant too for Dylan phrasing and

ADVERTISEMENT

rapid lyric fire as on "Soul Shoes." And the organ part on "You've Got To Be Kidding" sounds as though it's been dragged in from the "Like A Rolling Stone" sessions.

Even so Rumour build their own solid sound into the songs in an almost leisurely manner which is a real paradox to the ebullient feel they achieve.

New Musical Express 17 April.

GRAHAM PARKER, LONDON

LISSEN, GRAHAM Parker is a kid in a hurry. And if there's any justice, he's gonna go places. Judging by the performance at Dingwalls, after he and The Rumour have only done about nine or ten gigs, places is where he's going to go.

I don't know much about him, except that he writes all his own stuff, and plays it, and sings it, and if I wasn't careful I'd make some sort of comparison with a Mr Sprungstern. I'd have to be careful because Graham Parker without hype, and without that mysterious elan that New York's East Side is supposed to give you, is better.

The Dingwalls gig kicked off with a very band sounding 'That's What They All Say', and followed it up with more tracks from the forth-

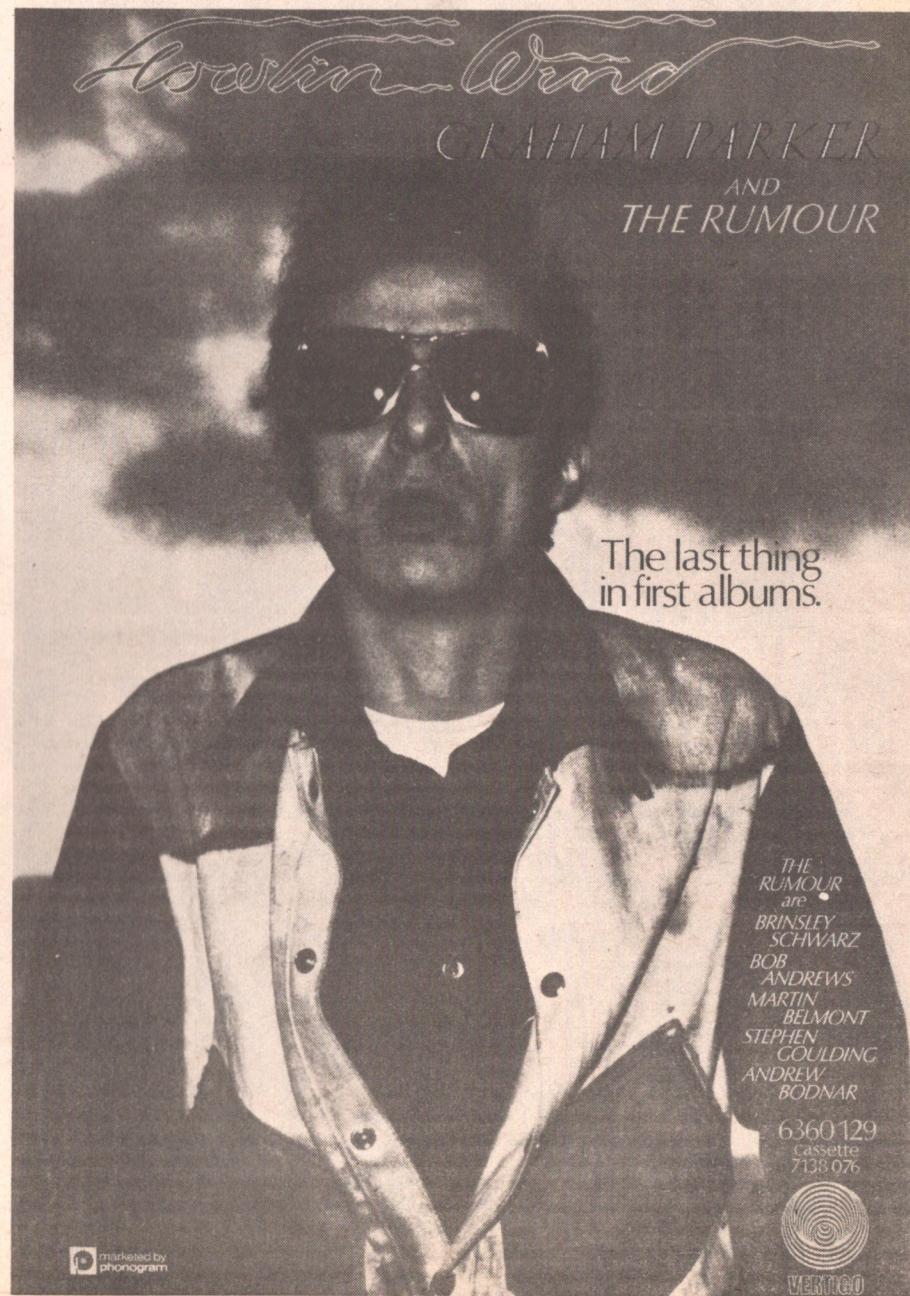
coming LP, Howlin' Wind (Phonogram have snapped GP up), including 'Nothing's Gonna Pull It Away', the fast, Jerry Lee-like 'Back To School Days', and the title track from the album, the haunting slow 'Howlin' Wind'.

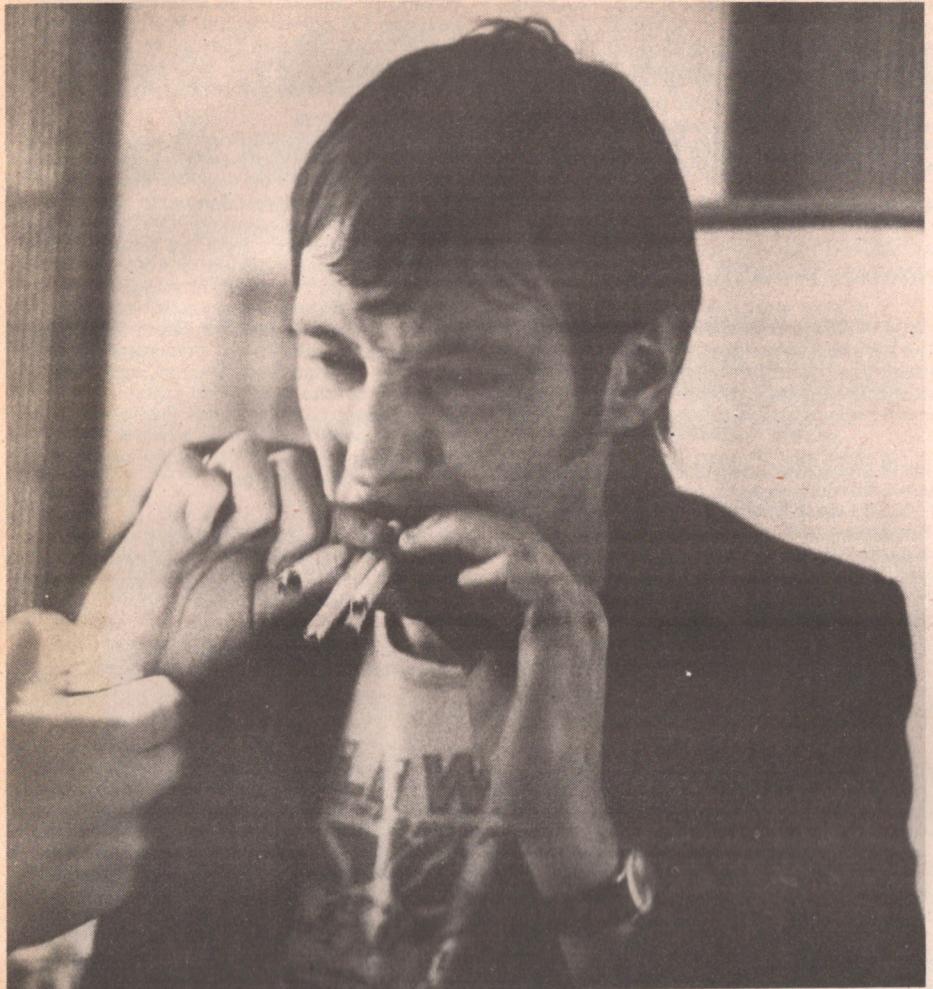
While we were gathering breath, a six piece brass section came on stage — and suddenly it was pub band benefit night. The Rumour are in fact a bit of Brinsley Schwartz and a bit of Ducks Deluxe, and guesting in the brass section was one of the guys from the Kilburns. You won't always see them with the brass, which is a pity because the effect is staggering. They surged into 'Where Were You When The Rains Came?', followed it with the one that's going to be the single 'Silly Thing', and one about a visit to a very strange 'Lady Doctor', and then stomped as into tight riffed submission with 'Soul Shoes'. Graham Parker is one of the most original people I've seen in months. He isn't a funk dispenser, he isn't a melancholy folk poet. He's all of them things.

Graham Parker is good because he's being exactly himself. And what comes across is that he's been working on these songs writing the tunes, saving himself up, and getting ready.

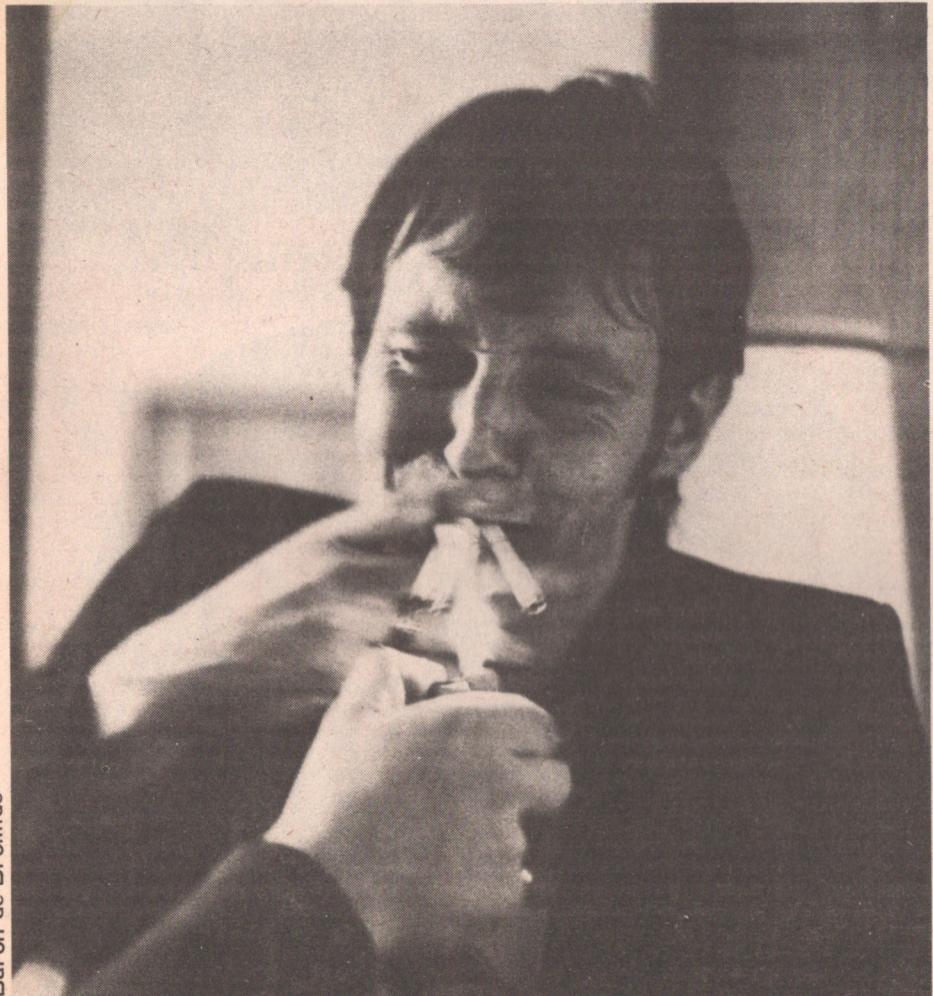
To paraphrase the by now immortal line, Graham Parker is ready for the world.

Sounds 3.4.76





Dr Feelgood's Lee Brilleaux learns to cope with the excesses of America. For in-depth shock horror drama probe - see next month's star-spangled issue.



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